VALLEY VOICE

Volume XXXV No. 9 • 7 May, 2015 www.ourvalleyvoice.com

Christopher Ekk Takes Helm at Hanford Fire Department

Dave Adalian

Chris Ekk had his eye on the top job at the Hanford Fire Department for a long time.

As far back as 2003, when Ekk was promoted to engineer after three years as a firefighter for HFD, he was thinking about his far future with the department.

"I made the decision this is something I wanted to do. Even in 2003, I was seeing fliers for other departments, the requirements. I wanted to prepare for that," he said. "My philosophy is always be prepared for that moment."

When the moment finally arrived this past March with the retirement of Chief Tim Ieronimo, Ekk was ready to take the lead spot.

Hanford's new chief, who was born and raised in Reedley, started in emergency services as an EMT, and was soon a volunteer firefighter, becoming a full-time employee in 2000. With promotion in mind, Ekk turned his attention to his education, earning an associate degree in fire technology at Fresno City College in 2004, a bachelor's degree in management and organizational development from Fresno Pacific in 2005 and a master's degree in emergency services administration in 2007 from Cal State Long Beach.

He is also a graduate of the executive fire officer program at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsberg, Md., expanding his firefighting know-how and fostering connections for the Hanford Department with companies around the States.

"It was a unique experience with people from departments all over the country," he said.

While he was preparing to someday take the lead at the HFD, he was quickly climbing the firefighting ladder, becoming an engineer in 2003, a captain in 2006 and rising to battalion chief two years ago. With 15 years in the HFD under his belt, Ekk is uniquely positioned to know the future needs of the department.

Preparing for the future

"Our needs haven't changed," he said. "We still need additional stations and personnel. There are some small, internal changes we're working on. People looking from the outside wouldn't notice."

The city purchased two plots of land that could house Hanford's third fire station, but that was before the economic downturn of the late 2000's, which put plans to expand on hold. In the meantime, the city has continued to grow, and now, where a third station would be most effective, is an issue that will have to be revisited, Ekk said.

"The economy slowed down, and everything just got stalled," he said of previous plans for expansion. "There are other locations being considered. We're still in the early phases of revisiting it. Budget-wise, can we do it?"

Better equipment needed

Also putting pressure on the HFD's purse strings is the need for a new ladder truck. The additional firetruck is needed, Ekk said, to provide the capability to fire fires in larger, taller buildings. The need is more acute now, as plans for additional hotels in Hanford are in the works.

Chris Ekk

"We currently have an apparatus with a ladder, but it's only 50 feet," Ekk said. "We have three-story buildings we can't reach, including our hospital and hotels."

A truck with a longer reach could have made a big difference in the outcome of the 2012 fire that destroyed the historic Vendome Building at 8th St. and Irwin Ave.

"We could have done some different tactics, maybe saved most of the

HANFORD FIRE continued on **9 »**

Visalia's Fourth of July Fireworks Show Cancelled

Catherine Doe

Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation has officially stepped away from the Fourth of July Freedom Celebration after 12 years of running the event. According to Carol Hoppert-Hays, Foundation president, the Foundation told the city and larger community about five years ago that it didn't have the resources to put on such an elaborate celebration. The Foundation aggressively started looking early last year for a service group to step forward but none did. Unless someone steps forward in the next couple of days there will be no fireworks show in Visalia for the first time in decades.

The City of Visalia's Freedom Celebration in 2014. Photo courtesy Alvarez Photography Studio.

When looking back at old newspaper clippings and paperwork, Hoppert-Hays estimated that the show has been a Visalia tradition for the last 45 to 50 years, with a few missed years in the eighties. In the past the show has been run as a for-profit by the Kiwanis, among other groups.

"I hate to see it go away," Hoppert-Hays said, "but we have been telling everyone for five or six years that we can no longer do it. We don't have the resources."

When the Foundation took the fireworks show over it was only supposed to be a stopgap measure until someone else stepped up to the plate. Their 18 members work almost all year on the event in addition to 30 volunteers recruited by the Foundation.

"Even though it is a recreational event it doesn't fit into the Foundation's mission and ate up all our time," she said.

Another deciding factor in the Foundation's stepping away from the event was the safety issue. The Visalia Fire Department does not feel that the Mineral King Bowl is an appropriate venue, spokesman have said. The Foundation has had to modify their program by clearing a wider area and not shooting the fireworks as high. Anyone who used to enjoy watching the fireworks from their front yard close to the stadium can no longer see them. The fireworks show stayed at Mineral King Bowl because of tradition, but the fire department has let it be known that the bowl can only be used for a few more years. New coordinators will have to use a different location such as

FIREWORKS continued on **9 »**

Mark Keppler, left

The League of Women Voters Welcomes Mark Keppler on May 19

Staff Reports

Get ready for a captivating discussion on current events and news makers when Mark Keppler, the CEO and Director of the Maddy Institute, is the special guest of the Annual Meeting for the League of Women Voters. The League Annual Meeting will be Tuesday, May 19 at noon in the LampLiter Inn.

Keppler will be speaking on the subject, "State Politics-Valley Implications".

Keppler moderates The Maddy Report, which is broadcast weekly on KVPT (Valley PBS) and KSEE(NBC Fresno). The goal of the Maddy Report is to encourage a deeper understanding of issues through objective and thoughtful exchange of ideas. The show is modeled after such programs as Washington Week in Review and Face the Nation.

The Maddy Report features interviews with national, state and regional leaders, as well as roundtable discussions with invited guests.

Lunch and presentation are $30 and reservations should be made by calling 732-1251 or email, newellgb@hotmail.com. Please RSVP by May 14.

Visalia City Council Delays Splitting into Voting Districts

Catherine Doe

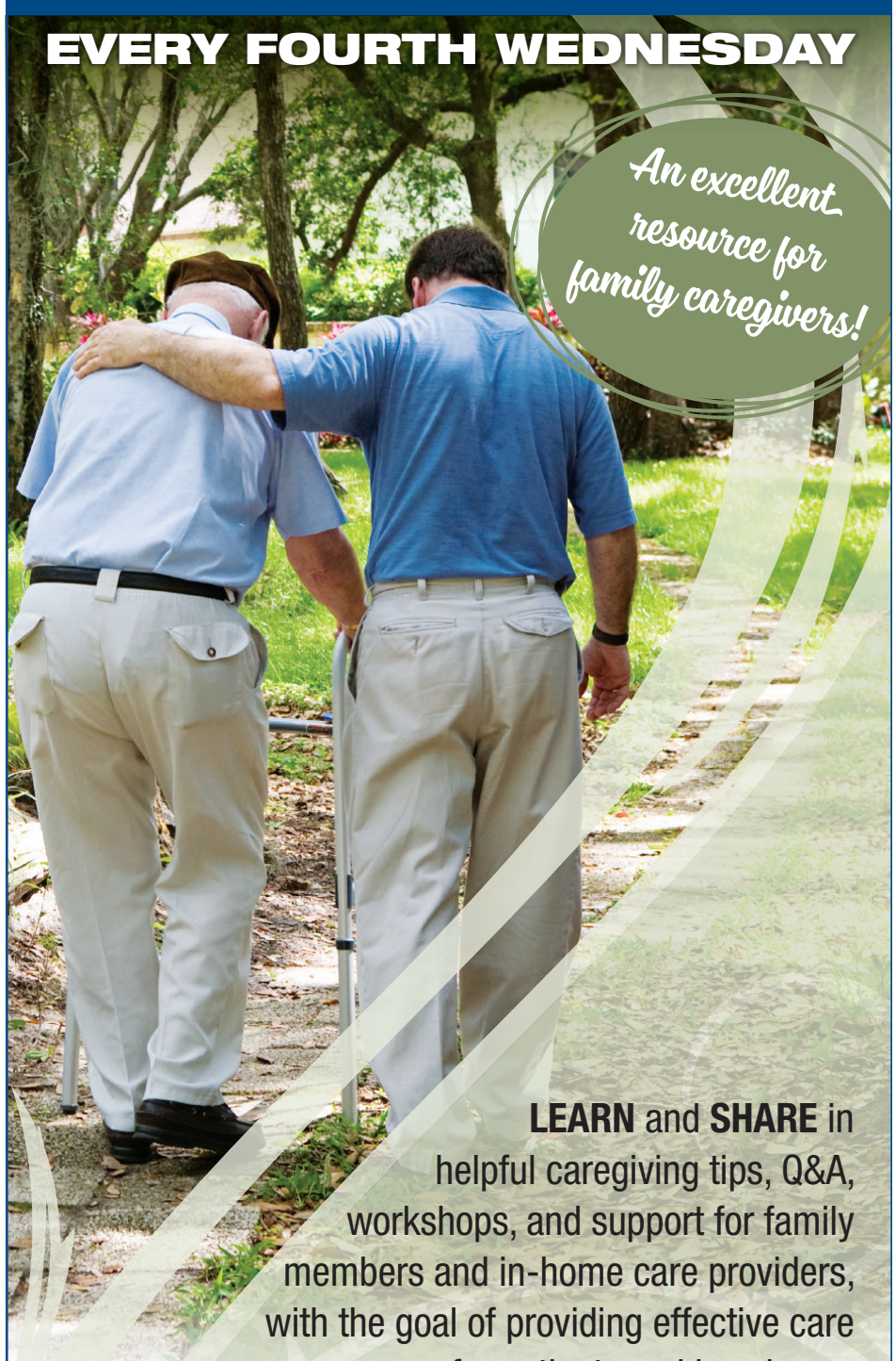
Choosing a final district map for the 2016 elections was put on hold during Visalia City Council's May 4 meeting. Councilmember Bob Link could not attend due to illness, and the other council members felt that this historic decision that should not be made without him.

Three public hearings have been held since March, when Doug Johnson, from the National Demographics Corporation, began guiding the council through the process of narrowing the 14 submitted maps down to four. Out of the four maps selected, two were drawn by the public and two were drawn by Johnson, a professional demographer. Johnson also pointed out that the

COUNCIL continued on **9 »**

Monthly Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

EVERY FOURTH WEDNESDAY



LEARN and **SHARE** in helpful caregiving tips, Q&A, workshops, and support for family members and in-home care providers, with the goal of providing effective care for patients and loved ones with Alzheimer's disease (AD).

THIS GROUP MEETS:

Fourth Wednesday of each month
6:00 to 7:30 PM

4520 W. Cypress Avenue in Visalia

For more information, call (559) 624-3503

Quail Park Memory Care
RESIDENCES of Visalia
A Senior Lifestyle Community

5050 W. Tulare Avenue in Visalia, California
(559) 624-3500
www.qpmcr.com

Affiliated with Kaweah Delta Health Care District
Lic. RCFE #547206596

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

A "Mental Basket Case of An Editor"

The *Valley Voice* is accused, occasionally, of not being balanced. As the editor, I receive many letters and emails on a wide range of topics. Let me show you what being unbalanced truly looks like verbatim:

Kumbayah LGBT, please let us keep our freedoms of religion, speech, a ssociation and assembly. (Letter to the editor for publication).

Feb. 2, 2015

President Thomas S. Monson's closing remarks in last October's LDS General Conference admonished us all to "stand up for what you believe in."

The tone of the January 27th LDS Church press conference was very Christ-like in terms of love and compassion towards our LGBT brothers and sisters. I question its timing, however, as the U.S. Supreme Court is just now gearing up to rule on same-sex marriage nationwide. The LGBT got the same kind of compassionate endorsement from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints just prior to the vote that allowed openly homosexual boys into the Boy Scouts of America. We may well hear Elder Uchtdorf in a future General Conference admit that "we made a mistake" again like they did with the Boy Scouts.

It could be, however, that President Monson needs us to stand up on this issue because he, his counselors and the Twelve Apostles cannot do other than state the Church's position on marriage and cooperate with the LGBT after the fallout from Church support of Proposition 8 and the hateful hostile harassing homo horde that use to gather around Temple Square at conference time. The LGBT is a well organized international network with political power in high places. Some of my letters on this subject have been published internationally. One country has advised me that because of those letters I am now "quarantined" from that country and to make note of it on my passport. Imagine the impact on the missionary program of the Mormon Church if its missionaries were suddenly banned from entering various countries. They will be banned in the U.S.A. some day, along with all other Christian activities, if the LGBT persuades the U.S. Supreme Court to redefine marriage to the detriment of a further encumbered United States of america.

If the U.S. Constitution is saved, it will not be the Church that saves it; but individuals that will not let evil triumph.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Jarvis P.O. Box 356 Salt Lake City, Utah 84110

PH: 801-706-2740 jarviseutics@netzero.com

Please refrain from emailing me in the future. If I published your letter it would only be to ridicule you--and I'm in a charitable mood just now. The freedoms you seek to safeguard are hollow without true tolerance. It's just about all I can do to tolerate you--and I do so chiefly because you have no impact on me. Much in the same way the LGBT community has no impact on me. And if something has no impact on one's life, it's a live and let live situation. What does have an impact is intolerance.

You will be the first one I email my next letter to. It is too bad Our Valley Voice readers have to suffer from such a mental basket case of an editor. Hopefully your publisher will realize this soon and replace you.

I am the publisher.

This revelation put me in the clear for a mere two months before the following arrived:

March 31, 2015

Dear Governor Pence,

Don't be afraid to discriminate against Ersatz (those that practice homosexual sex). Ersatz make demands for rights and protections they have no right to demand. They embrace Charles Darwin's theory of evolution over the Bible, which they say subjects them to "discrimination", and yet under Darwin's theory of natural selection Ersatz do not survive! At least Jesus Christ gives them a chance to repent.

Since Ersatz do not reproduce, and hence are not normal according to Darwin, they manipulate and pollute our society with normalizing equality propaganda (LGBTBS) and laws our country's Founding Fathers would never have imagined nor constitutionally protected. The U.S. Constitution was written with men and women in mind.

Ersatz are not genetic sexual mutants, which would be contrary to Darwin's laws of nature, but sexual mutants by choice; what Darwin would categorize as homosexual by election, or what I call homoelective. Homoelectives have a sexual preference that is non-compulsory by definition; as one can choose to abstain from sexual relations just as one can choose what kind of sex to engage in and with whom or what within the law that the ACLU would like to see expanded to include anything and anyone including children. The practice of homosexual sex should only be engaged in at ones own risk, not society's; nor with its stamp of approval by way of a marriage license. The practice of homosexual sex is personally and socially destructive and carries with it a just traditional and historical taboo, stigma and condemnation that is outside minority class protection from discrimination.

God gave each of us a brain to reason with and discriminate right from wrong and good from evil. We will each one day be held accountable before Him for the choices we made in mortality.

Stay the course of religious freedom with discriminatory rights for individuals, business owners and landlords as intended by the Indiana State Legislature in favor of the survival of our country as constituted.

P.S. I would like to see a huge anti-LGBT demonstration in front of the Indiana State Capitol building in support of the legislature's original religious freedom bill signed by you. They should first read-up on the LGBT lawsuit plundering the property and assets of Richland, Washington florist of faith Barronelle Stutzman.

cc: California Governor Jerry Brown

Someone should inform this guy that Governor Brown recently announced a zero surface water allocation for our thirsty nut trees; apparently, it requires just slightly more than one gallon to grow each California nut. What do you suppose it took to produce this Utah variety?

— Joseph Oldenbourg

Political Fix

Catherine Doe

An Adoring Fan

I rarely get feedback on Political Fix, so I was happy when a reader finally took the time to send me a personal email. It was Wayne Millies from the Whitlatch Group. He said, "It's quite clear you're a progressive liberal hack from your previous columns; however, you've outdone yourself this time with some very snarky David Letterman type top 6er's for Republican candidates, Rubio, Paul and Cruz. I look forward to your six things we probably didn't know about Ms. Clinton next edition. Perhaps you'll enlighten us as to where she was at 3 am when the phone range during the Benghazi attack."

I initially thought six facts about Ms. Clinton would just be too boring, to which Mr. Millies replied, "you're absolutely correct, she's dull in message and appearance. As Rubio pointed out, yesterday's news:) I look forward to your top 6 Clintonoids."

So by popular demand, my top six Clintonoids:

1. When Ms. Clinton was 12 years old, she wrote to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration asking how she could become an astronaut. She received a reply saying that NASA didn't accept women in the astronaut program.
2. Ms. Clinton's parents were Republicans and so was she. She considered herself a Goldwater Girl and a Rockefeller Republican. She said, "I liked Senator Goldwater because he was a rugged individualist who swam against the political tide."
3. Voters in Arkansas questioned the stability of the Clintons' marriage because after they wed in 1975 she kept her maiden name. After Bill Clinton lost his reelection in 1980 she succumbed to the pressure and took his name.
4. She hasn't driven a car in almost 20 years. The last time she drove was in 1996.
5. Ms. Clinton will be 68 when she runs in 2016 and regularly shows her age. She says her favorite TV show of all time is The Ed Sullivan Show. The show stopped airing in 1971. Her favorite music: the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. "I'm a child of the '60s, which is before any of you were born."
6. She was the only First Lady in American history to be subpoenaed. She was subpoenaed for her role in the Whitewater scandal.

What's New in Visalia

The Visalia Citizens Advisory Committee completed their yearly public opinion survey on April 25. The object of the survey is to give the city councilmembers a bird's eye view of how residents feel about the city. Twenty questions long, the survey focused on public safety and quality of life issues. It was taken in all four corners of the city to get a variety of opinions.

Final results will not be available until July, but I--being one of the survey takers stationed at the SaveMart in Mary's Vineyard--got a sneak peek. It seems that Visalians are pretty happy with how things are going. In answering the question, "How do you rate the city's efforts at providing a safe community?" all but two of my 23 respondents rated the city at average or high. Even more impressive was their response to how they would rate their quality of life in Visalia. All were average to very high with only one saying low.

Time to say goodbye…

There will be an empty chair at the staff's table next city council meeting. April 20 was Nancy Loliva's last city council meeting as Visalia's Community Relations Manager. When asked why she was retiring she said, "because I can! After 32+ years of asking 'what's next?' I am taking a little break from planning, spend time with family, do some traveling, and find whatever it is that I want to do to help Visalia be the wonderful city I call home."

Last Term for Greg Collins

It's still three years out, but Councilmember Greg Collins has decided this will be his last term in office. "No need to keep it a secret." He thought the advance notice would give a chance for good people to start thinking about running for his seat. He said that there is still some heavy lifting so far as decisions to be made but is hoping to wrap up loose ends before his term is up. By the end of his term, Collins will be 68 years old, and he and his wife are looking forward to traveling. He will have been on the council for 27 years by 2018.

What's New In the Presidential Campaign

What do Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush have in common? They are both running against Marco Rubio for president. The rest of the crowd barely registers on either candidate's radar. Mr. Rubio is a young, charismatic, first-term senator from Florida who will break racial boundaries if elected. Sound familiar? Ironically, the reasons for which the Republicans criticized Mr. Obama are Mr. Rubio's most intriguing assetts.

He does step in it too much to be considered a polished candidate. Mr. Rubio commented on Ms. Clinton's presidential announcement by saying, "now just yesterday, a leader from yesterday began a campaign for president by promising to take us back to yesterday. Yesterday is over and we are never going back." This statement coming from a man who is anti-pot, anti-marriage equality and clings to a relic of Cold War policy--keeping Cuba isolated. Mr. Rubio doesn't sound like yesterday. He sounds like the 1959.

Ms. Clinton does finally has some competition other than the flat earth society. Not just an Independent, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders challenging her for the Democratic nomination, but in Republican Carly Fiorina. Ms. Fiorina officially announced her candidacy May 4, saying, "I think I'm the best person

POLITICAL FIX continued on **4 »**

Gilbert Sunio, MD, is now offering a medically based, personalized weight loss program through the center for medical weight loss®

Dr. Sunio is Board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

- Non-surgical
- Physician-supervised weight loss
- Personalized just for you, based on your unique metabolism, hormonal or other disorders, medication and other physical weight loss issues

Gilbert Sunio, MD

SunioWeightLoss.com

Call 738-7565 to schedule a consultation.

Visalia Medical Clinic
VMChealth.com
Be Well
5400 W. Hillsdale • 739.2000

What's Happening at
TACHI PALACE HOTEL & CASINO

6TH ANNUAL
REZMADE CAR SHOW
SATURDAY, MAY 16TH
General Admission $25
Kids 10 & Under Free
Performance Live on State:
Evelyn Champagne King & Trina

The Doobie Brothers
THURSDAY, JUNE 4TH
Doors Open at 6PM
Showtime at 7:30PM
Located at the Bingo Hall
Tickets are $45, $65, $85

TACHI'S PRIZE PONG
NOW - June 3RD
Win your share of
$45,000 in Cash,
Tachi Cash, & Prizes!

TACHI PALACE Hotel & Casino

Our Gaming Floor and Table Games are for guests 21 years and older.
Bingo players must be 18 years and older.

TACHIPALACE.COM • 866-4PALACE • LEMOORE, CA

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

for the job because I understand how the economy actually works."

She certainly does! When Ms. Fiorina stepped down as the CEO of Hewlett-Packard the stock jumped 7 percent. Ouch.

Ms. Fiorina also said, "If Hillary Clinton were to face a female nominee, there are a whole set of things she won't be able to talk about. She won't be able to talk about being the first woman president. She won't be able to talk about the war on women. She won't be able to play the gender card."

Dr. Ben Carson, a retired nurosurgeon, also announced his candidacy for president on May 4.

He made the announcement in his hometown of Detroit with his mother on stage with him. Dr. Carson said that the American Dream is still alive.

"If you notice, there are a lot more people trying to get into the United States than get out."

With Dr. Carson in the race Rand Paul's dreams of cornering the conservative Black vote is going to stay just that--dreams.

The GOP's new-found diversity may be short-lived. We may think Ms. Fiorina is a household name but she is barely known outside of California.

Both she and Dr.Carson face the same problem of name recognition which is hurting them in the polls. Their poll numbers are so low it is going to be hard for either to qualify to join their fellow Republicans on the debate stage.

This and That for Your Entertainment

Lawsuit Filed to Legalize Prostitution

It seems that California doesn't just want to legalize marijuana, a lawsuit was filed to strike down California's law making prostitution illegal. According to the AP, "the rights of adults to engage in consensual, private sexual activity (even for compensation) is a fundamental liberty interest," the lawsuit states. California formally outlawed prostitution in 1961.

This suit is being filed not only by women who want to work legally as prostitutes, but by men who want to be able to pay for sex.

Intolerant Jackass Act Initiative

Remember the ballot initiative that advocate gays be put to death by bullets to the head or by any other convenient method?

According to the Los Angeles Times, a Woodland Hills author and activist, Charlotte Laws, just filed with the Secretary of State an initiative that "would require anyone who proposes measures calling for the death of gay people to attend monthly sensitivity training and to donate $5,000 to 'a pro-gay or pro-lesbian organization.'"

Her ballot measure is called "The Intolerant Jackass Innitiative."

A new UC Campus?

A state bill has just passed through committee to appropriate $50 million towards developing a new University of California campus. Right now there are 10 universities in the system.

The newest campus, UC Merced, is not filled to capacity, but the other nine are overcrowded and have experienced a huge drop in admission due to a lack of space.

The new campus will focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. According to the San Diego Guardian, the bill's sponsor, Mike Gatto of Glendale, said that the legislation doesn't yet pick a spot for the campus. It might be in an area near Silicon Valley, the Los Angeles area, or in a part of the state without a nearby UC campus.

More than 500,000 immigrants have applied for a driver's license

Did you know that if your teenager wants to apply for a new driver's license they can't just show up at the DMV anymore and wait in line? Any first-time applicant has to make an appointment.

This is a result of Assembly Bill 60, allowing immigrants to get a California driver's license. Now people start lining up at 6am every morning and circle the DMV building to fill out the application.

To handle the overflow, the DMV has even opened four new offices throughout California just to handle immigrants' licenses. Since January 2, 501,000 immigrants have filled out the application. The number is expected to double by midyear.

The inconvenience of long lines has a payoff. It now means that all the undocumented drivers now know California's driving laws. It also means that there are a million more drivers with car insurance.

Rants and Raves

The *Visalia Times-Delta (VTD)* did not cover the Visalia City Council or the Tulare County Supervisor meetings, save for a few press releases, for a month because their lead reporter was out on sick leave.

That means that the *Valley Voice* has been the only media in attendance and, as a bi-monthly publication, that is not enough to keep the citizens informed of major decisions affecting their lives. Of course the *VTD* could have sent a substitute, but since several of their reporters live in Salinas or the Central Coast, and the ones that did manage to keep their jobs with the *VTD* have to do double duty for the Salinas Californian, there isn't anyone left.

Marina Gaytan, who has covered the city council and supervisor meetings before, could have done it, but the paper decided instead to crown her "Downtown Diva."

Gaytan has a new assignment with the *VTD* to "shop till she drops" mixed in with coffee breaks and bar hopping.

I guess the paper can't get its act together to send one reporter to a few meetings but can take the time to strategize launching a new frivolous assignment.

Are new shoes and microbrews more important than Assemblyman Devon Mathis' upcoming water bills, the canceling of the Fourth of July Fireworks show, or that the city's new voting districts?

The *VTD* needs to be successful because it is our city's only local daily.

What is going to happen to Visalia when the powers that be realize that no one is watching? Putting in press releases and AP articles is not called reporting. It's called cut and paste. The readership of the *VTD* needs to start demanding their local paper resume reporting on local news.

Sequoia Shuttle to Kick Off Summer Season

Staff Reports

To kick-off the summer season, on Thursday, May 21, Sequoia Shuttle is offering round-trip tickets for only $5.00. It is a convenient, comfortable and car-free way of travelling to Sequoia National Park. Taking the Sequoia Shuttle will save money on gas while reducing congestion in the park.

The 2015 Sequoia Shuttle season runs from May 21st through September 27th, with round-trip tickets for $15. The shuttle departs from various convenient locations throughout Visalia and Three Rivers before traveling to the Giant Forest Museum. The shuttle runs seven days a week, offering several trips throughout the day starting at 6 am. Shuttle tickets include park entry and unlimited shuttle service inside the park to all major trailheads and attractions.

"Riding the Sequoia Shuttle to the park offers so many advantages. It is easy, convenient and economical, plus it reduces private motor vehicles in the park. Each 16-passenger shuttle is wheelchair accessible, features comfortable seats, luggage space and an informative video during the trip" said Monty Cox, Visalia Transit manager, which also manages the shuttle service.

This summer, visitors can shout from the top of Moro Rock or meditate in one of nature's finest sanctuaries, Crescent Meadow. After riding the scenic route aboard the Sequoia Shuttle and arriving at the park, the first stop is the Giant Forest Museum—where the adventure truly begins. From the museum, visitors will have access to the in-park transit system; with five routes that stop at all major trailheads and attractions.

Route 1 (Green Route, The Giant Forest Route): This is the most popular route within the park. Starting from the Giant Forest Museum, this route takes guests to the General Sherman Tree and to the Lodgepole Market and Visitors Center.

Route 2 (Gray Route, Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow): This route provides access to Moro Rock, located between the Giant Forest and Crescent Meadow. The view from the rock encompasses much of the park, including the Great Western Divide. This route also stops at Crescent Meadow, acclaimed by many to be the gem of the Sierra.

Route 3 (Purple Route, Lodgepole/Wuksachi Route): This route goes from Lodgepole to Wuksachi Lodge. Located in the heart of Sequoia National Park, the Wuksachi Lodge is the perfect place for visitors to unwind for a multi-day getaway.

Route 4 (Orange Route, Wolverton Route): This route is in operation during peak season (July to September) and provides access from the General Sherman Tree to many of the backcountry trailheads located at the Wolverton area.

Route 5 (Red Route, Potwisha Route): This route departs from the Giant Forest Museum and stops at Potwisha camp ground.

Sequoia Shuttle is perfect for families, hikers, groups, seniors or anyone simply looking to take advantage of nature's playground. Round-trip tickets on the Sequoia Shuttle can be booked as a day trip or a multiday vacation. Groups also receive a special group rate.

For more information about the Sequoia Shuttle, how to make reservations and/or to view current specials visit www.sequoiashuttle.com

The Valley Voice Building.

The Valley Voice Has Moved

The Valley Voice would like to announce that it has moved from its office in Montgomery Square to its own building on the south side of Visalia at 3350 S. Fairway St.

The paper will occupy the top story of what is now the Valley Voice Building.

Staff would like to extend its thanks to its former landlord, Mr. William Martin.

Airport Holiday Inn to Become Wyndham

The 10 year lease is up for Holiday Inn and the owners decided to sign a new contract with Wyndham Hotel and Resorts.

Wyndham is considered an upgraded product over the Holiday Inn name. According to the Visalia Times Delta, "the property will undergo $6 million in renovations and upgrades, and operate under a new 15-year agreement. The hotel will remain open during the renovations scheduled to be completed by fall 2015."

Wyndham Hotels and Resorts operates hotels throughout the U.S, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and China.

Also recently, The City of Visalia just signed a contract with the Welcome Group to take over management of the down town Marriot. The Welcome Group has committed to putting $5 million of renovations into the Marriott Hotel and setting aside a large number of rooms at a discount price to attract conventions.

DETECT BREAST CANCER
EARLY
WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

SIERRA VIEW MEDICAL CENTER
INTRODUCES BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGY

We are at the cutting edge of mammography innovation.
New technology at Sierra View uses 3D-like imaging to improve breast cancer detection rates by up to 16%!

Digital tomosynthesis mammography:

- displays breast tissue in layers
- improves accuracy making cancer harder to hide
- gives fewer false positives and false negatives
- looks and feels like a traditional mammogram

Call (559) 791-3940 to make your mammography appointment at Sierra View Medical Center.

Your Health Partner for Life.

SIERRA VIEW MEDICAL CENTER
Imaging Services
465 W. Putnam Ave | Porterville, CA
(559) 791-3940 | www.sierra-view.com/imaging

Agriculture

First Apps for Ag Hackathon Brings Growers and Developers Together

Tom Wixon

The old horse and plow days are long gone and Central Valley farmers today are more apt to take to the fields in an air conditioned, computerized machine that may resemble a lunar landing vehicle, armed with an iPad or mobile phone and a GPS system. So it seems only natural that the inaugural Apps for Ag Hackathon at West Hills College Coalinga brought six teams of software developers together with area farmers to create "mobile apps" they can use on the farm. The apps, created in less than 48 hours, are designed to solve problems surrounding irrigation schedules and pest control, among other routine agricultural chores.

The event, founded by the AgTech Roundtable, featured approximately 40 developers working to develop apps that would help influence real world problems in agriculture.

"Everyone involved with this event did a fantastic job," said Carole Goldsmith, President of West Hills College Coalinga. "The brain power gathered together for that weekend resulted in creative solutions that will be used to improve agriculture."

Apps were developed that tackled a variety of issues including plant management and water control. However, three apps came out on top.

SWARM, a crowd sourced pest prediction mobile app, won first place. The app presents users with photos of different kinds of pests and allows them to identify them or compare the identified pests with whatever pests might be affecting their crops.

Tomato2aT, which came in second, is a tomato irrigation scheduling app that helps users use the least amount of water to get the best crop. It also features the ability to have a text reminder sent to the user's phone and is adaptable to any crop.

NuTree Source, which placed third, allows the optimization of almond yields with smart budgeting and the tracking of fertility inputs.

"Actual, usable apps were created that Central Valley farmers can adopt to help them better organize and streamline their crop production," said Clint Cowden, the director of the WHCC Farm of the Future and one of the organizers of the event. "Everyone who attended was very positive and our teams got a lot done."

The event, held April 17-19, attracted several big players in agriculture, including Catherine J. K. Sandoval of the California Public Utilities Commission and Robert Schmidt, Chief Information Officer for the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The Hackathon may prove to be only the first of several similar events in California.

"We had no idea what to expect from this event but I am very impressed," said Robert Tse, State Broadband Coordinator for USDA California Rural Development, who also attended the Hackathon. "This hackathon was an outstanding success and I can see this being a catalyst for a series of events across the state in the months to come. It opened up a rare connection between ag and technology. Too many people think that agriculture means a horse and a plow still."

Preparing for the Eventual Legalization of Marijuana

Marilyn Kinoshita

Recently the State of California released several guidance documents and potential permitting requirements for marijuana cultivation.

Publishing of such documents is puzzling to the County Agricultural Commissioner community because marijuana is not currently recognized as an agricultural commodity by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), nor has the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) registered any pesticides for use on the plant, thereby rendering all pesticide applications to marijuana illegal.

It is anticipated that California voters will do as those in Colorado did to relax state law. State agencies are attempting to get out in front of a freight train loaded with known problems.

In a fact sheet produced by the State Water Resources Control Board, they mention not wanting to enter the debate over the legality of growing marijuana in California, though growing operations on public land are illegal.

They go on to list the unauthorized diversions of water from streams, deforestation, erosion and illegal use of rodenticides and other pesticides associated with marijuana cultivation. It is somewhat comforting to know that marijuana growers would face the same fines over the diversion and use of surface water and discharges of waste if caught, but education and outreach do not work on the criminal element.

The public can report illegal activity, but risk their lives by stumbling into such a grow site.

Another document released by CDPR is meant to educate the pot growing public on federal and state registration of pesticides, submitting pesticide use reports and employer obligation to protect their workers from exposure to pesticides.

Regarding the use of rodenticides, the article mentions that any federally restricted-use product can only be used by a certified commercial applicator and offers suggestions of products that act as rodent repellants, such as garlic or Putrescent Whole Egg Solids.

The problem is that the average pot grower dumps over-the-counter rat bait in piles and does not care about secondary exposure to raptors.

Our Association is carefully watching several bills related to marijuana cultivation within California and doing our own education and outreach to the authors.

This past year, two pieces of legislation were introduced that either potentially impacted or were of concern to Commissioners. Both bills were introduced in anticipation of an eventual legalization of marijuana – scary, isn't it?

Article courtesy Tulare County Farm Bureau

ATI

Serving Farmers Since 1975

ATI MACHINERY
AG EQUIPMENT RENTAL
• Challenger MT865 – MT855 – MT845 – MT835 – MT765
• John Deere 9620T – 9520T – 8430T – 8520T – 8400T
• John Deere MFWD Wheel Tractors – 275HP to 150HP
• Cat Challenger 95-85-75 Rubber Belted Tractors
• Case MX285 – MXM 175 Wheel Tractors
• Cat D8K Direct Drive Mounted and Drawbar Tractors
• Cat D6C – 3 & 5 Shank Rippers - Discs

Call: 1-888-461-0625 www.atimachinery.com

California Leopold Conservation Award Seeks Nominees

Staff Reports

Sand County Foundation, the California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation are accepting applications for the $10,000 California Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors California farmers, ranchers and other private landowners who demonstrate outstanding stewardship and management of natural resources.

"The Leopold Conservation Award celebrates the people and places where innovative and creative thinking and experimentation are taking place," said Judith Redmond of Full Belly Farm, recipient of the 2014 Leopold Conservation Award. "If you or a friend include conservation in your daily decision making – I hope you'll submit a nomination. It's okay to brag about good land stewardship."

"Good intentions and luck take no farmer down the road to profitability and improved land health. Leopold Conservation Award recipients epitomize the creativity, drive and heartfelt conservation commitment it takes," said Sand County Foundation President Brent Haglund.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the Leopold Conservation Award inspires other landowners by example and provides a visible forum where farmers, ranchers and other private landowners are recognized as conservation leaders. In his influential 1949 book, A Sand County Almanac, Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage, which he called "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity."

"California's future gets brighter only if we all do our part," said Sustainable Conservation Executive Director Ashley Boren. "The Leopold Conservation Award celebrates those deserving, but often overlooked, landowner heroes who do their part every day to steward our environment in ways that benefit people and the planet. The Leopold Conservation Award is proud to have recognized a diverse range of agricultural operations over nearly a decade – including CSA, dairy, rice, vegetable and tree crop farmers, as well as cattle ranchers."

"The Leopold Conservation Award recognizes unique yet replicable strategies a farmer or rancher has developed in managing their land, to be the best steward of the natural resources on their farm or ranch. California farmers and ranchers are the most productive in the world and are trendsetters at maximizing the fullest potential of their land to produce food and other agricultural products with the least environmental impacts," said California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger.

Nominations must be postmarked by July 10, 2015, and mailed to Leopold Conservation Award c/o Sustainable Conservation, 98 Battery Street, Suite 302, San Francisco, CA 94111. The 2015 California Leopold Conservation Award will be presented in December at the California Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Meeting in Reno.

The California Leopold Conservation Award is possible thanks to generous contributions from many organizations, including The Nature Conservancy, American AgCredit, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, DuPont Pioneer and The Mosaic Company.

ABOUT THE LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD

The Leopold Conservation Award is a competitive award that recognizes landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. The award consists of a crystal award depicting Aldo Leopold and $10,000. Sand County Foundation presents Leopold Conservation Awards in California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

ABOUT SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

Sand County Foundation is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to working with private landowners to advance the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices that benefit the environment. www.sandcounty.net

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Responds to Grand Jury Report on Mooney Grove

Catherine Doe

On April 14 the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (BOS) reviewed the Tulare County Grand Jury report on Mooney Grove. Members of the public have been approaching the BOS for more than a year, during which time the condition of the park has actually declined. In response to public concerns and criticisms about the management of the park, the Tulare County Grand Jury launched an investigation.

Because the report has not been made public, it was difficult for Tulare County residents to comment. A few people rose to speak but their questions were not answered because the head of Tulare County Parks and Recreation, Neil Pilegard, did not attend the meeting. Jean Rousseau, County administrative officer, made the presentation to the BOS. According to the information provided by the County there were eight findings and five recommendations.

These revolved around park activities, the drought, tree diversity, animals, entrance fees, mobile vendors and special events. Report finding number 7 simply said, "There are currently a number of proposals for changes in Mooney Grove Park."

It is unknown what exactly the Grand Jury meant by this statement, or if this was the Grand Jury's wording in its entirety. The County's response was that there is the Mooney Grove 20-Year Conceptual Master Plan--and that is the only plan that has been approved by the BOS. The County response went on to say that the BOS is always seeking business and community partners to bring new activities and recreational features to the park.

The Grand Jury report, and the County's responses, were extremely vague and resolved none of the problems expressed by concerned citizens during the past year.

At the March 24 BOS meeting one such citizen said that he couldn't understand how a county that is number one in agriculture, which feeds the world, can't get it together to take care of a park. The public has expressed concern over what has been called the filthy pond, the proliferation of trash, crumbling bridges, sidewalks, fountains and monuments, the concession stand being closed and disappearance of the row boats. None of these issues were addressed by the Grand Jury report according to the information provided by the BOS. The actual Grand Jury report is due to be released to the public sometime during the next few months.

After Rousseau finished his report, Supervisor Steve Worthley did address some of the public's concerns about the park. He acknowledged that the conceptual plan is too broad a document and "just gets dusty sitting on a shelf." The plan was drawn up seven years ago and, while revised earlier this year, has thus far only produced the agriculture museum--which has cost the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. Now acknowledged as an asset to the community, the museum was initially met with opposition. County residents say they want a beautiful park in which to picnic and bring their children to play, which were the original wishes of Hugh Mooney. They do not want park money going toward the staffing and maintaining of a large museum.

Worthley suggested that a Mooney Grove Task Force be formed by members of the Tulare County Historical Society and other community members. The task force would not only advise on how to finally implement the conceptual plan, but could address the immediate needs of the park.

The task force would have a set timeframe and parameters to accomplish repairs such as fixing and replacing the barbeque pits and benches. He suggested that an initial amount of $50,000 might be approved by the BOS to complete this type of urgent park maintenance. Once the task force has formed, and they start implementing the improvements, Worthley said, "It will be a great opportunity to promote the park and move forward."

Also in the works is a Parks Advisory Committee. Its bylaws are currently being written up and the committee should be ready to go in May. The Parks Advisory Committee would advise the BOS on all of the county parks, of which there are 12. The Mooney Grove Task Force would not be part of the Parks Advisory Committee, but they would collaborate on certain projects.

An interesting revelation about how the County plans on dealing with Mooney Grove's feral cats came out in response to the grand jury report. According to an article in the Visalia Times-Delta, in 2013 the Tulare County Animal Control received 26 cats from Mooney Grove. Two were adopted and the other 24 were euthanized. According to Pilegard this method of trapping and euthanizing has been practiced for more than 20 years in the park.

After spending thousands of taxpayer dollars on euthanizing cats, Tulare County is now embracing the trap, neuter and release (TNR) program. TNR has been offered to the county for free.

Dr. Nan Kuswa, owner of Companion Animal Medical Center, said that "we have had continued discussions about TNR where I do think they are going to officially OK the program."

In Tulare County's response to the Grand Jury report, one of the few paragraphs Rousseau did not read during the meeting, said," the County is exploring a variety of alternative methods of addressing some of the problem species in the park that would allow a humane way of addressing some animals, while maintaining the park environment. One of these methods includes the feasibility of a trap, neuter, release program to address feral cats."

Transitions Children's Services
BECOME A FOSTER PARENT!
Open your heart and home to a child in need.
(559) 623-9124
www.transitionschildrensservices.org
Licensed Facility Number: 547200864

Serving the Valley for over 70 years
Willitts Pump COMPANY
30548 Road 196 ~ Exeter, CA • 559-594-5020
• Right Angle Gear Drives • Submersibles • Electric Motor Shop
• Complete Pump Equipment Design • Repair & Replace Well & Booster Pumps
• Pump Testing ~ 700hp-1200hp • Certified Electricians • Well Video Services
• Machine Shop • VFD • Soft Start • Oil Lubricated Line Shaft
• Water Well Repair Services • Cement • Water Lubricated Line Shaft
~ Since 1943 ~

Visalia Chamber of Commerce Hosts State of Business Expo

Catherine Doe

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce hosted the 2015 State of Business Expo on April 23. The annual meeting featured a question-and-answer session with local entrepreneurs Steve McCartha of True Legacy Consulting, Matt Ainley of 4 Creeks Engineering and Natalie Fronczek of Goodies Cookies and Specialty Cakes. Gail Zurek, president of the Chamber of Commerce, discussed the strategic direction of the Chamber for 2015 and unveiled its new logo. Chamber members and volunteers were also recognized for their support and work with the Chamber.

The three members on the panel revealed the newest trends and gave valuable advice for local start-up businesses. Fronczek related how much reality TV such as Cake Boss had affected her business. She said everyone wants the big fancy cakes, cake bars or what they see on Pinterest.

"They want the New York ideas," she said, "but on a Visalia budget."

Fronczek's biggest challenge is indulging her clients with the latest trends while staying within a certain price.

Her advice for new businesses was, "If you want to bake, go work for someone else. If you want to start a business, then start a business."

She does not do any of the baking for Goodies, but rather all the marketing and front counter sales. She said that once, when she went to the back of the store to bake for a few weeks, her business declined by 17 percent. She advised people to stick to what they do best or their business will suffer.

McCartha's advice to new businesses was to write down what got you into business the first place.

"That is an asset you can't bottle and will keep you going," he said.

Noting he feels Visalia is about five years behind what is going on in businesses elsewhere, he said, "We really need to start looking at our business practices."

McCartha said he can charge four times as much in Los Angeles because there they understand the importance of strategic planning, or IT. His big city clients want to know if he can keep them cutting edge, new and ahead of the curve. They know if they don't "they will get their butt kicked. Here if you have a network and a decent idea then you can make it but in LA or SF you better have it all."

Ainley said while a new trend was to outsource to India, now businesses are outsourcing to the Central Valley. Because we have the workforce, reliability and affordable cost of living, we have a competitive edge, he said. Businesses also know when they outsource to the Central Valley they get that California flair, education and training you don't get in the Midwest.

Fronczek said that after she bought Goodies in 2009, she worked 90-hour weeks with no vacations or pay checks before she became profitable. She says it was all worth it.

McCartha said that he does not "work" a day in his life because he loves what he does. Ainley ended the panel by saying that you need to share your information and collaborate with your staff and other businesses.

"Don't be protective of information. You need to invest in the next generation coming up," he said.

Nicole Fronczek and a coworker from Goodies Cookies

After the panel, Zurek gave an update on the health of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. She reported that during the last four years the Chamber had experienced a 94 percent retention rate. She also mentioned that membership was up 10 percent and that two of their yearly events, the Christmas Tree auction and Oktoberfest, had sold out.

New for 2015 is the Visalia Chamber of Commerce's location. They are now located at 222 N. Garden. Because of their move, the Chamber had to order new stationary, business cards and letterhead--so they decided to develop a new logo. This was revealed during the presentation.

Zurek took over the reins at the Chamber last September after previous president, Glenn Morris, took a similar job in Santa Maria. Judy Fussel, the Board of Directors chair, said that since Zurek has come on board, she has never stopped. Before announcing the Chairman's award for Volunteer of the Year, Fussel wanted to make sure that everyone knew how much the board appreciated everything Zurek has done.

Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Deanna Saldana, the chair of the Christmas Tree Auction for the past five years. The Ambassador of the Year was awarded to Jeff Gooding. He was described as the man first to arrive at an event and the last to leave. He also recruited five new businesses to join the chamber last year.

After the program, the 2015 State of Business Expo took place in the Charter Oak Ball room. The Expo featured more than 40 local businesses, as well as six new businesses being launched by the students of the Young Entrepreneurs Academy. The Chamber partnered with CASA of Tulare County, Valley Oak SPCA and the Visalia Rescue Mission to help them raise money, and attendees could donate five dollars to any of these non-profits in the lobby in lieu of purchasing Expo tickets at the door.

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Council

Continued from p. 1

council did not have to pick a perfect map. The consulting firm could make small adjustments through their specialized computer program to even out the districts' boundaries and balance out the population.

During a work session in April, the council expressed a preference for maps that were easy to read, community orientated, and that had one strong Hispanic district. They were also keen on any map that had a second viable Hispanic district. The council felt that as Visalia grew, the second viable district would increase in Hispanic voters and result in a more diverse city council. It is interesting to note that the two chosen maps submitted by the public were drawn up by Hispanics. Vincent Salinas' submitted a map focused on "communities of interest." The other finalist was drawn by GI Forum, an Hispanic organization that also heavily leaned on the concept of neighborhoods.

Even though race could not be a predominant factor in the final decision, the city could be sued if the council chose a map that did not have at least one predominately Hispanic district. Because of the Voting Rights Act, any map that did not have at least one district over 55% Hispanic was considered too be too risky to consider.

The biggest difference between the public's maps and those drawn by the NDC was "pairing." Pairing is when two sitting council members end up in the same voting district. While NDC seemed to believe this was a huge problem, the public did not. The council did not voice its opinion about pairing but have consistently shown an interest in the maps drawn by NDC. None of the NDC maps had two council members in the same district. To achieve this goal the NDC maps cut through neighborhoods and have the appearance of gerrymandering.

Of the 11 maps drawn by the public, all had at least one pairing, the most common between Warren Gubbler and Amy Shuklian, who live in the same vicinity around Akers Road.

The Last Public Hearing

May 4 was the last opportunity for the public to comment on the maps. Vincent Salinas spoke first during the public hearing to defend his concept of "Communities of Interest." Collins called Salina's map intriguing. He could see that district 1 was oriented around the downtown but asked him to explain his four other districts. Salinas said that he grew up in Visalia and saw each neighborhoods' evolution: such as district 2 being the result of Golden West High School that opened in 1978, and district 5, the Linwood area, that was all farmland and dairies and now has recently turned residential. Salinas said that when he created his districts he did not take ethnicity into consideration but that it just happened because he understand the neighborhoods. Salinas' map has one district that is 58% Hispanic.

Rene Lapin, a community activist, commended Salinas on his integrity for not taking into consideration his place of residence when drawing his map. She said that although he would have a good chance of winning an election to the city council in the Hispanic district because of his surname, he put himself in District 3 which is predominantly White. Lapin has criticized the two NDC maps for creating districts that weren't in the best interest of Visalia but rather the incumbents. She stated that "the more the public is able to participate, the greater degree of credibility."

Former Visalia Mayor Jesus Gamboa came to the public hearing to support the maps drawn by Salinas and the G1 Forum. Gamboa said that neighborhoods should stay together and that the borders should not be stretched or changed to accommodate an incumbent. He said that the two NDC maps didn't pass the gerrymandering smell test.

Al though the council members knew they were not taking a final vote that night, they revealed which final map they preferred. Collins said that he could live with either Salina's map or the one drawn by the GI Forum. He did fear the competing interests that neighborhoods could generate. "What might be best for a particular district may not be what is best for Visalia." He also lamented over the possible sway that money could have on a small district. "It doesn't take much."

Councilmember Gubler said that he would support NDC 3, the map drawn by Doug Johnson. He liked that map because it had a large Hispanic district of 60%. It also had a second viable Hispanic district, a Mooney corridor, a downtown district, and did not pair two council members in the same district.

Mayor Nelsen said that he preferred the other map drawn by Johnson, NDC 2. He liked the fact that there was room to expand each district when adjustments will have to be made after the 2020 census.

After the council picks a final map, the last step will be to choose which districts will be up for reelection in 2016. Two seats will be up in 2016, and three in 2018. With the old at-large system Bob Link and Amy Shuklian would have been up for reelection. The path of least resistance for the council would be choosing one of NDC's maps that do not pair any candidates. Then the council could vote that District 5 and District 3 be on the 2016 ballot where Shuklian and Link live respectively. Johnson did recommend that the predominantly Hispanic district come up for election in 2016, but it wasn't a legal requirement. Depending on the map, putting the Hispanic district up for election might cut Mayor Nelsen's term short.

After the 2020 census districts will need to be redrawn. The city council will receive the new population data by 2021 and the new districts need to be ready by 2022.

Council member Amy Shuklian never participated in choosing a map or in the debate. Her vote against the final four maps last month was a protest vote for being "blackmailed" into cutting Visalia into districts. Visalia voted down the idea of districts years ago. She feels as though she represents all of Visalia, not just one district.

The regular city council meeting on May 18 will be held at the convention center. The city staff is anticipating a large turnout for a discussion on the sign ordinance. A final map of the five voting districts will also be chosen at that meeting.

Council Votes to donate $10,000 to Houston School Park

The city council voted 5-0 to donate $10,000 to the Houston School Park. Two years ago Houston Elementary School, with the help and encouragement of the Neighborhood Church, decided to collaborate on making a park. Houston is located in Northern Visalia in an older, under-resourced neighborhood with no parks within walking distance.

The Church and school decided they needed a safe place where families can exercise and play. The Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) has agreed to let the park be built on an empty field connected with the school. The VUSD also agreed to continue to maintain the property.

Houston School parents, students and volunteers from Neighborhood Church have already collected over $133,000 through fundraisers, donations and in-kind gifts. They need an additional $135,000 to install a walking path, picnic area and playground. A group of students and parents made a presentation in front of the council asking them for financial help. The city staff had suggested $10,000.

If the money were to come out of the General Fund both Link and Nelsen were against the donation. Nelsen said that they would not be good leaders if they spent the General Fund which has not fully recovered from the recession. Link did not want to set a precedent and said there were dozens of worthy projects in which to donate.

Gubler responded by saying that this is exactly the precedent he wants the city to set. All of the current parks have to be built and maintained by the city. He saw this as a bargain and thought the city should be encouraging more of this type of civic involvement. Neither the building nor the maintenance is going to be the city's financial responsibility.

Collins didn't think $10,000 was enough and was leaning towards $15,000. He felt that the money should come from developer impact specially set aside to build parks. He mentioned that a new housing development was being built just eight blocks away and the fees should come from there. Alex Peltzer, city attorney, was skeptical that those development fees could be used for the Houston Park.

Shuklian reminded the council that they donate $10,000 every year to the Freedom Fireworks Show on the Fourth of July, but that event will probably be canceled. Because no organization has stepped up to organize the show, Shuklian suggested that the money go towards the park. Shuklian moved that the city staff research the possibility of the money coming out of the developer's impact fees, and if not, use the money normally given to the Fourth of July show.

City Council considers putting bond on 2016 ballot

At the April 20 city council meeting the council discussed the possibility of putting a bond measure on the 2016 ballot. Whereas sales tax revenues have increased since the recession, the costs of running the city have increased faster. During the council's January retreat Eric Frost, Deputy City Manager, told the council that they were going to have to get creative. He said that maintaining and improving the infrastructure, and paying for all of the things the citizens of Visalia want, will be a challenge.

To help make a decision about the use and possibility of a bond measure, the council voted on resurrecting the Blue Ribbon Committee from 2013. That committee explored the possibility of increasing Visalia's sales tax. The committee eventually voted to put off raising taxes for a few years until there was a definite need.

The current need, as expressed by several council members, is a new city civic center because the current administration buildings are falling apart. Other needs were discussed such as road maintenance and parks. The council voted for the Blue Ribbon Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee to collaborate on deciding how the city should use the bond money.

The city isn't the only entity that needs money. College of the Sequoias, Visalia Unified School District and Kaweah Delta Hospital can all put competing bonds on the 2016 and 2018 ballot, leaving it less likely that a city bond would pass.

Fireworks

Continued from p. 1

Riverway Sports Park or Gropetti Stadium at Golden West High School.

It takes anywhere from $30,000 to $55,000 to run the show, which enjoys an attendance of approximately 8000 people. Hoppert-Hays said that the Foundation trimmed the cost of the show to get it into the black by changing from a computer-generated to a hand-fired program. It was also able to extend the show from 15 minutes to 20 with the hand-fired fireworks.

To keep it a free event the Visalia City Council has donated $10,000 every year. Admission is free but donations are requested at the gate. This year the city council has discussed the possibility of donating the $10,000 to a new park being built at Houston Elementary School.

Even though the Foundation has officially stepped away from the event, it would be more than happy to help a new group take over and show them how it has been run. Hoppert-Hays said that they never ran the show to make money but it could be a money-maker, if admission were charged.

"This show needs much more attention than we could give it. The event would be perfect for a large service group with a lot of members."

Hanford Fire

Continued from p. 1

building," Ekk said. "We need to get over the building to get water in the right place. It's a reach problem."

The new truck, which has a larger carrying capacity than those the department has in its fleet, would also function as a rescue vehicle for non-fire emergencies, carrying tools such as the jaws of life. The price tag, however, is hefty, ringing up at around $1 million.

"We're working with the manufacturer on funding options," Ekk said.

Volunteers needed

The department is also working on getting the community and the department more aligned in working toward their common goals. In particular, Ekk would like to see more citizens lending a hand in aiding the department as it works emergencies, such as providing water to firefighters on scene and filling other roles volunteer and paid firefighters currently cover.

"How can we get more members of the community involved in support positions?" Ekk asked. He also hopes that staff -- which he describes as a "tough, dedicated group of people" -- can also make a deeper connection in return.

"We're looking at ways of how we can be an integral part of the community," he said. "Our department is dedicated to providing the best service we can."

TCAC Holds Ordinance Meetings

Ron Pierce
SPECIAL TO THE VALLEY VOICE

Tulare County Animal Control (TCAC) is planning changes to their policies, procedures and county ordinances regarding the way that division of Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency interfaces with the pet owners of Tulare County.

Residents of unincorporated areas of Tulare County can expect to hear about proposed changes to Tulare County Animal Control ordinances and lend their opinion and expertise to staff during public meetings that are being held by Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency.

The first of three public "listening" forums took place at Earlimart Elementary School last month. Turnout was sparse, consisting of four individuals and a couple of late stragglers, who did not speak. The County's presentation staff were polite and attentive to the many questions and remarks voiced by Wendy Jones, whose legal battle with TCAC has joined with Bill Fabricius, a disabled Navy veteran. Fabricius has been repeatedly targeting by TCAC, he said, resulting in the death of more than 30 of his ranch dogs and a bill from the County for a $30,747, purportedly for TCAC's seizure, subsequent impound, boarding and vet bills.

Anita Irving, a long-time resident of Tulare County, raised important access issues for elderly Tulare County residents in terms of TCAC's planned abatement measures.

"Where the County is planning on designing access to TCAC's features through internet access," she said, "the County should keep in mind that elderly and disabled residents might encounter obstacles with this plan, particularly older residents who may not be as conversant with utilizing the internet for their needs."

Of the many concerns voiced by those in attendance, the most commonly voiced was the probability of an expanded fee schedule which TCAC claims would remain subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Other concerns voiced by Jones and Fabricius centered on their combined suffering of what both described as willful disregard of due process in TCAC's current warrant procedures. Jones and Fabricius both raised a number of concerns surrounding the County's plan to expand animal control agents' authority to serving warrants in lieu of law enforcement, and TCAC's plan to initiate their new procedures over rural aspects of Tulare County.

"The County's plan doesn't appear to consider the fact that some rural areas of Tulare County are not immediately subject to county authority where some land, such as my own, falls under land patent dating back to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo," Fabricius said.

"I've tried numerous times to educate county authorities with TCAC regarding this aspect of their territorial jurisdiction, or lack thereof. Unfortunately, this reality of their territorial jurisdiction seems beyond their consideration and my efforts to explain this limitation on their authority and application of county ordinances to rural land in Tulare County to date have been largely disdained. One would think that County Counsel would understand the legal ramifications of county authorities enforcing county ordinances over 'unincorporated land,' but that office doesn't appear to understand property law either."

Two more public meetings regarding TCAC's planned changes were scheduled. One in Dinuba took place on April 23 and a third is scheduled for Porterville on Thursday, May 14, at the Porterville City Council chambers.

Gingi and Jonathan Freeman with their two month old speaking in front of the city council.

Visalia's Got Its Goat?

Catherine Doe

An enthusiastic pro-goat rally took place in front of Visalia's City Hall before the May 4 City Council meeting. After the rally, participants entered the chambers to speak during public comment. At issue was the city's ordinance on household pets.

Many Visalia residents came to the meeting to encourage the council members to change the ordinance to allow dwarf goats within the city limits. The council is currently deciding on whether or not to allow chickens as household pets. According to Josh McDonald, city planner, the household pet ordinance has not been updated since the 1970's.

The movement started when Gingi and Jonathan Freeman received a notice in the mail from the city stating that they had 10 days to get rid of their goats or face a $1,000 per day fine. They have since moved their goats to the breeder's house.

Gingi Freeman raised goats as a child in Lemoore and now uses them as a source for making baby formula for her three-month-old and her 19-month-old daughters. She is unable to breast feed and goat's milk is the closest substitute.

In response to the city's threatened fines, Freeman started a campaign on Change.org and has stood outside Walmart and Visalia's Thursday night Farmers Market to collect signatures. Thus far she has received more than 1,000 signatures, half of which are Visalia residents.

Both sides of the debate showed up at the city council meeting. About 10 supporters spoke during public comment, encouraging the city council to change the ordinance, and one speaker spoke out against the goats. The argument against revolved around the fact that people move into the city to get away from farm animals. The speaker felt that for the safety and health of the city's residents that livestock should only be allowed in rural areas.

"Farm animals have their place. I want to be able to sit and relax by my pool without smelling goat pee," the Visalia resident said.

Gingi Freeman said the average miniature goat weighs between 35 to 65 pounds, and make excellent pets due to their good-natured personality, friendliness, and hardy constitution. Female and neutered male goats do not generate significant odors, are not violent, do not wander the neighborhood like cats nor generate the noise that dogs do. They are far less likely to spread disease. She also added that after calling the city staff of other major cities that allow dwarf goats, such as Seattle and San Diego, they have had no problems.

"Out of 4 million people I could not find one complaint," she said.

Those in favor of changing the ordinance to allow dwarf goats within the city limits said that they would rather have goats than deal with the feral cat colonies throughout Visalia.

A speaker from Three Rivers, where owning goats is legal because the community is not incorporated, said that he has never hear of a vicious goat attack, or even a biting incident. Another speaker said that she chose to get rid of her rabbits because of the smell and buy dwarf goats instead. She also said that she fed her premature baby goat's milk because it was the best alternative.

The overwhelming consensus was that Visalia residents should have the right to raise their own dwarf goats, feed them organically, and practice self-sufficiency, especially if it doesn't bother anyone else. With the noise, vicious attacks and the smell, dogs and cats are a huge burden to neighborhoods. Allowing dwarf goats could actually alleviate the situation by allowing residents a wider choice of pets.

A difference of opinion sprung up about whether one could smell the goats or not. The speaker against changing the ordinance said that homes with dwarf goats smell like a petting zoo, except that the petting zoo has more sanitary restrictions. Those who supported the goats encouraged the city council members to go to a home where there are dwarf goats and pick up goat feces and smell them. Where dog and cat feces regularly get tracked into houses, this does not happen with the goats. Nor does their pee smell, supporters claim.

After speaking privately withFreeman, a city planner has agreed to go out to her house and inspect the goats living quarters and determine if they smell or not. Freeman met with the city staff May 5, to determine the next step needed to take to get the item on the city council agenda.

Newmark Grubb
Pearson Commercial

AVAILABLE:

Office 6,168sf
$470,100 - $75/sf
Lease $3,700

Industrial 55,920sf
$13,980 - $0.25/sf

Service Commercial
2,000sf
$800 - $0.40sf

Ask for **Mike Porte**
(559)972-2421 BRE# 01075873

Providers needed in Tulare County

Seeking loving individuals to support an adult with special needs.

Must have spare bedroom.
Complete application on site.
Receive up to $2,250+/mo.

Meet Wednesdays at 3pm.
3530 W. Mineral King Ave,#A
Visalia, CA 93291

Ask us about our referral bonus

California MENTOR Family Home Agency 559-636-2894

www.MentorsWanted.com

CTS&S Air Tool Repair

Tony Story
Phone 559-623-2157
Fax 559-734-4148
ctsandscompany@gmail.com

Sylvia Story
1805 E. Main St. Suite E
Visalia, CA 93292
www.ctsandtoolrepair.com

Now Hiring!

Certified Medical Assistant
Experience required
Immediate opening
Venipuncture required
Send resume to:
812 W. Main St. Visalia CA 93291

Assemblyman Mathis Holds Press Conference to Promote His Water Legislation Package

Amanda Morello

On April 24th, Assemblyman Devon Mathis held his first press conference in the district to share his 2015 Legislative Package which was focused on California's historic drought. Along with local leaders, Mathis spoke at the St. John's Riverbed in Visalia to announce his answers to #CaWaterCrisis.

Local supporters, which included residents, realtors, farmers, activists and Tulare County's Supervisors Pete Vander Poel, Allen Ishida and Steve Worthley, held signs with bold red text spelling out "Survivability." Californian is currently suffering through a four-year drought while some communities across Tulare County have lived without running water for more than a year.

"I believe the support my fellow elected leaders gave me and my legislation today, shows that we are at a turning point in California's leadership. We are standing together to stop politics as usual by working together to implement a plan of action from combined ideas, we can correct the issues our predecessors ignored for far too long," Mathis said.

"When we have an environmental agenda diverting more water to fish instead of the people, priorities have run off the rails. If our state wants continued growth in both its economy and population, the experiment of 'Sustainability' can no longer be the guidelines for our government. 'Survivability' must be.

"California's top priority must be focused on responsible water management for our exploding population," he continued, "and have the foresight to plan for additional growth. During times of crisis, environmental agendas must not inhibit the recovery to human life.

My bills take a common sense approach to responsibly using taxpayers' hard-earned money to pay for what they voted for," Mathis said. "I am tackling the problem right where it starts, government overregulation. My bill package will eliminate the hurdles of CEQA to begin shovel-ready recycled water projects and is in line with the Governor's Executive Orders. Another bill will divert Cap-and-Trade funds from High Speed Rail in order to provide true, life-giving water projects to the citizens of California. This will not only help our water storage problem, but will also strengthen our electrical grid through clean hydroelectric power generation. Finally, if our leaders were able to bailout Wall Street, we ought to be able help our neighbors by providing grants and low- interest loans for residents to drill wells."

Devon Mathis speaks to a crowd including Supervisors Vander Poel, Ishida, and Worthley.

While speaking on the banks of the dry St. John's riverbed, Mathis unveiled his legislation, which includes five bills focused on various aspects of our state's water issues.

Assemblyman Mathis' 2015 Water Legislation Package

AB954, the California Water Accessibility Program, is designed to use General Fund money to create a pilot water program for grants and low-interest loans to tie homes to existing water systems, re-drill wells or install treatment systems if groundwater is contaminated.

AB955, Emergency Water Funding, will address the drought by providing temporary water supplies for drinking and sanitation to homeowners, renters, multi-unit dwellings and small businesses.

AB956, the California Water Infrastructure Urgency Bill, will exempt local individual or community water recycling projects from CEQA in order to address the needs of the people during this historic drought. There are many projects across the state which are delayed because of lengthy and expensive requirements of an Environmental Impact Report. CEQA has been waived several times for projects such as sporting arenas, allowing projects that produce life-giving water the same exemption.

Devon Mathis with a concerned citizen.

AB957, the Prop1 Taxpayer Protection Bill, will protect taxpayer funds from being used for projects other than water projects. Distribution of Prop 1 Water Bond funds for recycled water projects will be given to communities heavily dependent on groundwater and communities that are undertaking projects to extend water service and delivery to individuals and communities with contaminated or dry wells.

California Democrats Refuse to Put Water Where Their Mouth Is

On April 27, Mathis presented two water bills, the aforementioned AB956, and another bill, AB 397, which would divert money from the High Speed Rail to fund water projects. The bills were presented to the Natural Resources and Transportation committees and were voted down.

"I am very disappointed that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle failed to put water where their mouth is on the water issue," Mathis said. "Time and again, they are given the opportunity to enact true policy which would bring water to a thirsty California. And time and again, they stand against the people of California to side with their big labor and environmental extremist special interest groups."

Assembly Bill 397 would have placed before the people of California the option of diverting funds from the High Speed Rail in order to fund water projects across the state. AB956 would have waived CEQA on any project seeking to recycle water.

"It is inconceivable that while we have communities across this state that are living in third world conditions, including my district, that any member of the legislature can gleefully waive CEQA to build a football stadium, but can't do it to provide water, even in their own district," he said. "It is also unacceptable that our state leaders have focused on High Speed Rail and impose mandatory water restrictions on people who do not have anything, instead of delivering real answers to the people."

Natural Resources Committee voted down not only Mathis' AB956, but also Assembly Member James Gallagher's bill, AB 311, which would have provided an expedited process rather than a full waiver of CEQA.

"I came to Sacramento determined to work with all willing members to find real world solutions to our state's problems. The only greater threat to the people of this state than the historic drought is an out of control government. I will continue to seek agreement where I can, but it is time that the people of this state rise up and hold those who put special interest before the basic necessity of life," Mathis concluded.

HADLEY-MARCOM
FUNERAL CHAPEL
Dignified & Affordable without Compromise

Scale back on price, not service

Complete Cremation $1,395 *
Complete Funeral $3,995 *
Including 20 gauge metal casket

General Price list is available at our funeral homes.

**Plus tax and cash advance items.*
**Based upon the purchase of a funeral package with this ad*
Prices effective as of March 1, 2015 and are subject to change without notice.

1700 W. Caldwell, Visalia
625–8900 FD2129

332 E. Visalia Rd., Farmersville
594–1063 FD2048

Fresno Nephrology Medical Group, Inc.

STEVE SU, M.D.
JOSEPH C. DUFLOT, M.D.
HARPREET DHINDSA, M.D.
MEI HWANG, M.D.
SUKHVIR S. ATWAL, M.D.
JASJIT SINGH, M.D.

STEVEN B. LEVY, M.D.
ANURADHA SURI, M.D.
YANGMING CAO, M.D.
HEMANT DHINGRA, M.D.
GREGORY MARTINEZ, M.D.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are pleased to announce the opening of our Visalia offices.

Visalia Nephrology Medical Group
and
Announce the Association
of
DAVID HEANEY, M.D. and MAGDY G. MAKSY, M.D.

515 W. Acequia Suite A, Visalia, CA 93291
500 South Sante Fe Avenue, Visalia, CA 93292

Specializing in Kidney Disease, Hypertension, Transplant Evaluation, Diabetic Kidney Disease

Please call our office at 559-228-6600 if you wish to schedule your next appointment at our Visalia offices.

Briefly...

FELONY CHARGES FILED IN LARGE SCALE MARIJAUNA BUST

The Office of the District Attorney filed multiple felony charges against thirty-one individuals in connection with a large nursery style marijuana grow in south west Tulare County. These individuals were charged with possession of marijuana for sale, cultivating marijuana, and maintaining a place for controlled substance sales. A special allegation that a principle possessed a firearm during the commission of a drug offense was also filed, as well as an allegation that one of the defendants had previously been convicted of marijuana sales.

On April 22, 2015, the Tulare County Sherriff's Department executed a search warrant at a 60 acre parcel located on Road 112, south of Avenue 24 in the Earlimart area. Detectives began investigating the site on January 27, 2015, when aerial observations revealed several large greenhouses suspected to be involved in the illegal cultivation of marijuana.

The search revealed a sophisticated marijuana growing operation. A total of 11,206 live viable plants were located in 49 greenhouses that had been constructed on the premises. An additional 1,102 immature marijuana plants were located inside the residences on the property. Along with the live plants, Detectives located a total of 2,260 pounds of harvested marijuana that was in the process of being trimmed and dried. The Sherriff's Department estimated the street value of the marijuana being cultivated and processed at $27,400,000.

The marijuana plants were being watered from an underground well located on the property. It is estimated that a mature marijuana plant consumes 6 gallons of water per day, putting the total water consumption of the grow site at 67,236 gallons of water each day. As Tulare County farmers deal with limited water availability, the defendants in this case were busy depleting local aquifer reserves.

The defendants will be arraigned on the charges this afternoon at the Tulare County Pretrial Facility.

LEMOORE SEEKS TO FILL BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES

The City of Lemoore is seeking Downtown business representatives to fill Board Member vacancies on the Downtown Merchants Advisory Committee. The term is one year and expires December 31 annually.

The Committee provides recommendations to the City Council regarding expenditures of the Parking & Business Improvement Area (PBIA) Fund. Such expenditures may include Downtown music, street light banners, decorative refuse cans, benches, curbside planter boxes, promotional materials, holding promotional events such as the Kings County Homecoming (Lemoore Night), Holiday Stroll, street parties, farmers markets, and other events as determined by the Committee to benefit the Downtown Area.

Meetings are typically held one time per month and are currently scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:15 PM. Meeting dates/times may vary due to upcoming events and/or Member's schedules. Meetings are open to the public.

To apply, please fill out and submit the Application for Public Service Appointment found at the following link: http://www.lemoore.com/application_for_public_service_appointment.pdf or pick up an application at City Hall, 119 Fox Street, Lemoore.

Submit completed applicatons to: City Clerk, City of Lemoore, 119 Fox Street, Lemoore, CA 93245. For additional information, please call City Hall at 924-6700. The deadline to apply is May 8, 2015.

STAGE 2 FIRE RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT MAY 20, 2015

The past four years have seen an unprecedented drought not only in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks but the entire Sierra Nevada Range.

Weather stations across the area are showing well below normal seasonal rainfall for this time of year. Furthermore, the winter snowfall was practically non-existent, leading to the smallest high elevation snowpacks on record.

With the early season Potwisha Fire this past April, it is apparent that conditions in the park are exceptionally dry. Fire danger is currently at levels that are normally seen in June.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Superintendent Woody Smeck said, "In order to protect our visiting public, staff, and the parks resources and assets, we must be proactive in our approach to this year's fire season."

Therefore, directed by the Superintendent of the parks, pursuant to the procedures in Appendix M of the parks' Fire and Fuels and Fire Management Plan, Stage 2 Fire Restrictions will be effective at 8:00 a.m. on May 20, 2015

SIERRA BANCORP DECLARES QUARTERLY CASH DIVIDEND

On April 17, 2015 Sierra Bancorp (Nasdaq:BSRR), parent of Bank of the Sierra, today announced that its Board of Directors has declared a regular quarterly cash dividend of $0.10 per share. The dividend was approved subsequent to the Board's review of the Company's financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2015, which reflect continued capital strength, relatively robust operating results, substantial loan growth, and a sustained favorable trend in credit quality. The dividend will be paid on May 14, 2015 to shareholders of record as of April 30, 2015. Including dividends paid by Bank of the Sierra prior to the formation of Sierra Bancorp, the Company has paid regular cash dividends to shareholders every year since 1987, comprised of annual dividends from 1987 through 1998 and quarterly dividends since then. The dividend noted in today's announcement marks the Company's 65th consecutive regular quarterly cash dividend.

Sierra Bancorp is the holding company for Bank of the Sierra (www.bankofthesierra.com), which is in its 38th year of operations and at over $1.7 billion in assets is the largest independent bank headquartered in the South San Joaquin Valley. The Company has over 400 employees and conducts business through 28 branch offices, an online branch, a real estate industries center, an agricultural credit center, and an SBA center.

CASA VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

CASA is the acronym for Court Appointed Special Advocates. CASA of Tulare County is a local 501(c)3 non-profit agency established in 1984 by a grass roots effort led by Juvenile Court Referee, the late, George Thurlow.

CASA is a national organization which started in 1977 in Seattle, Washington when a concerned judge needed more information to make life-changing decisions about the future of children in the dependency court.

CASA of Tulare County's misssion is: To speak up for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect - advocating for their safety and well-being by training community volunteers to represent their best interest and be their voice in court.

CASA's message is simply "I am for the Child."

CASA of Tulare County is in need of volunteers.

A CASA volunteer can make a difference in the life of a child. CASA has over 300 children waiting to have a CASA volunteer to be their voice in court and eyes and ears for the Judge to make a better decision for that child's future.

The first step is to attend an orientation. Orientations are held at the CASA office 1146 N. Chinowth Street, Visalia CA 93291 (corner of Chinowth and Goshen).

Orientations are every Monday at 5:30pm and Thursdays at noon (except for Holidays).

For more information please contact Carrie Margosian at CASA of Tulare County (559) 625-4007 E-mail: carrie@casatulareco.org Website: www.casatulareco.org

Please "Like" our CASA of Tulare County Facebook page. CASA's next Training Session will begin June 16, 2015.

If you are interested please call the CASA office so we can get you enrolled in our next training class.

If you feel you are not able to be a volunteer please share the need for volunteers with others or make a donation to CASA of Tulare County to help our program.

CASA of Tulare County would like to thank our community for your support in anyway you can.

CAL WATER NOW ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

California Water Service is now accepting applications for the 2015-2016 academic year for students in its service areas. The deadline is June 1.

Scholarships totaling $60,000 are available. Two top scholarships of $10,000 each will be awarded to students who demonstrate financial need, with one scholarship based on academic achievement and the other based on community service.

Other scholarships range from $1,000 to $5,000, to be awarded to students based upon financial need, academic achievement and community involvement. The program, which is funded by shareholders, not ratepayers, is administered by Scholarship Management Services, a nonprofit organization.

Eligibility requirements include plans to enroll in full-time undergraduate study at an accredited two- or four-year college or vocational-technical school. Students must live in a Cal Water-served area and cannot already hold a degree or diploma from am accredited two- or four-year college or vocational-technical school.

To apply or for more information, visit www.calwater.com/community/scholarship.

DOLLAR TREE STORES TO PAY $2.72 MILLION SETTLEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS

On April 27, 2015 District Attorney Tim Ward, together with 45 other California District Attorneys and two City Attorneys, announced that Alameda County Superior Court Judge Morris Jacobson has ordered Virginia corporation Dollar Tree Stores, Inc. to pay $2,720,000 in civil penalties, costs, and supplemental environmental projects. Dollar Tree Stores is also ordered to implement an improved hazardous waste compliance program at its retail stores and distribution centers in California. Dollar Tree Stores has eight stores in Tulare County, and pursuant to the judgement Tulare County agencies will receive $30,625.00 of the civil penalties, plus reimbursement for costs incurred by the County.

The judgment is the result of an investigation into Dollar Tree Stores' unlawful disposal into store trash bins of hazardous waste products. Ignitable and corrosive liquids, toxic materials, batteries, electronic devices and other e-waste, and other hazardous waste generated by circumstances including spills and damage, were illegally handled and disposed of at each of its stores and distribution centers, which total over 480 facilities in California. Instead of being transported to authorized hazardous waste facilities, the waste was illegally transported to local landfills not permitted to accept such waste.

The investigation included statewide inspections of Dollar Tree Stores' dumpsters by inspectors from district attorney's offices and other environmental regulators who discovered that Dollar Tree Stores was routinely and systematically sending hazardous waste to local landfills. Store inspections over the years also demonstrated Dollar Tree Stores routinely failed to properly handle and dispose of hazardous waste. Prosecutors alerted Dollar Tree Stores to the widespread violations, and Dollar Tree Stores was cooperative throughout the continued investigation. Dollar Tree Stores adopted and implemented new policies and procedures and training programs designed to properly manage and dispose of hazardous waste. The hazardous waste is now being collected by state-registered haulers who transport it to authorized disposal facilities, and disposal is properly documented.

This case was investigated locally by District Attorney Investigator John Lee and members of Tulare County Department of Environmental Health Services, and handled by Senior Deputy District Attorney Rodney Blaco.

Judge Valeriano Saucedo's Last Hearing Takes Place in a San Diego Courtroom

Ron Pierce
SPECIAL TO THE VALLEY VOICE

Judge Valeriano Saucedo is one of Tulare County's longest-serving family law judges. Saucedo became Tulare County's first Hispanic judge when he was appointed to the bench in 2001. His wife Teresa concurrently served as Tulare County Counsel during her husband's reign "of power".

Judge Saucedo's infamous rise to office as a California judge ended (for all intents and purposes) Monday, April 27, 2015, in San Diego at the Fourth District Court of Appeal before the public. If found guilty by the commission, Saucedo could face penalties ranging from public or private admonishment to removal from the bench.

Clear and Convincing Evidence for Removal

Saucedo sat floridly before California's CJP tribunal as Examiner Harrigan weaved the elements of Saucedo's many revealed improprieties as a sitting judge of Tulare County Superior Court.

At every step, Harrigan connected the embarrassing details of phone messages, money transactions, legal advice/intervention, and falsified court records, which jigsawed together forming a model of Saucedo's center-driven lust of judicial "power" and notoriety, which he used to get whatever he wanted; in this case his court clerk's attention.

The comparison of Saucedo to two other recent California judges in the news for having sex with their clerks was made by Miller, Saucedo's own attorney. Perhaps intended to demonstrate Saucedo could have behaved worse, it had instead the effect of shaming the judge further. We may never know what really happened between Saucedo and his clerk, Pricilla Tovar; however, both deny any actual physical intercourse.

That Saucedo used his money and office as a California judge to pursue Tovar, Miller failed to impeach. Indeed the tribunal seemed more interested in seeking clarification on improprieties they apparently felt both attorneys hadn't developed enough!

The Saucedo Scandal escalated rapidly in 2013 in a scant few months, culminating in its middle with Saucedo's "call for help" to Tovar threatening suicide if she would not remain quiet about their affair. When Tovar agreed to keep quiet, Saucedo recovered quickly, readily resuming his public office as "Your Honor" before bar and bench. Foregoing suicide, he looked into becoming an appellate court judge, instead. Not surprisingly, it was not long before he arrived at his inevitable decision to just crack on as if nothing had happened. He was, after all, "a very powerful man" as he repeatedly told Tovar and others in vicinity. Sadly, Judge Saucedo's pugnacious judicial behavior is typical of many family court judges across the United States, who enjoy a system designed by bar and bench to pad judicial corruption away from legal consequences.

One of the most interesting aspects of the closing arguments happened when Miller attempted to again blame Tovar for the Judge's misconduct. Harrigan would have none of it, stating in response that Saucedo's camp was essentially "revictimizing Tovar." Harrigan argued that California judges should be expected to behave better, whether or not another party purposefully sought to take advantage of them. Examiner Harrigan asserted that Saucedo's efforts to blame Tovar for what happened only served to further demonstrate his avoidance of what was expected of him as a California judge; that he was unfit for the bench.

Discussion ensued regarding the various state and federal felonies Saucedo likely committed during his affair with Tovar. This was followed by discussion of the actual number of Canons of Judicial Ethics Saucedo likely violated contemporaneously. The tribunal requested Harrigan clarify several legal issues via post hearing brief, which the Examiner assured he would file as soon as possible.

Early in closing, Examiner Harrigan compared Saucedo's defense to a painting by René Magritte, "The Blank Check", stating much of Saucedo's testimony fit other elements at trial to form a picture more constructed to deceive than to promote a true and accurate picture of his actions during his affair with Tovar; a picture Harrigan stated "jars the senses" as a display of Judge Saucedo's "single-minded purpose of seduction" and "quid pro quo of intimacy."

Other Victims of Judicial Corruption in Tulare County, California

Bill Fabricius, a long-time resident of Tulare County, is claiming he was targeted by Tulare County Counsel and Judge Saucedo. This happened scant days before Saucedo's threatened suicide call to Tovar on November 3, 2013.

Fabricus claims that, after he discovered falsified court records and manipulation of his family court case, Tulare County Counsel suddenly cobbled together a falsified "warrant" which grossly violated state law and Due Process, which Saucedo signed overnight, but which was never valid.

The picture painted by Examiner Harrigan generally supports Fabricius claims of falsified court records as a "problem the public doesn't stop to think about", says Fabricius, taking a pause to consider how to phrase his next statement. "No one wants to believe that court records can be falsified. No one wants to believe that judges themselves would falsify records. To actually learn of such a thing would call into question the very integrity of the court system. But the reality is that it happens all of the time, particularly in California, and certainly in Tulare County Superior Court. The trial of Judge Saucedo revealed that."

As for the Commission's possible removal of Saucedo from the bench, the agency long ago lost its effectiveness to protect the public from judicial corruption. With the CJP's history of failing to protect Californians, taken alongside its own state interests, the likelihood that Judge Saucedo will continue in public office despite his behavior remains entirely probable.

Until real accountability ensues, Saucedo remains on the bench, "a very powerful man."

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE AUTHOR OF THIS ARTICLE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE VIEWS OR BELIEFS OF THE VALLEY VOICE OR ITS STAFF

Tulare Regional Turns Around

Dave Adalian

Tulare Regional Medical Center (TRMC) is firmly back in the black.

The once financially beleaguered health care district announced that March's revenue marks 12 straight profitable months in a row. The accomplishment comes as work continues on its once-stalled expansion project, a four-story tower that now stands partially completed, and in the wake of the opening of rural clinics in Tulare and Earlimart, and the reopening of its Lindsay Healthcare Center. A third new clinic is planned.

Jack Stones, vice president of construction for HealthCare Conglomerate Associates, shows the recently completed walkway connecting Tower 1 to Tulare Regional Medical Center's main facility. Completing construction will cost some $50 million. Photo by Dave Adalian.

"This is a nice comfort level for me," said Alan Germany, CFO and COO for HealthCare Conglomerate Associates (HCCA) which took over operation of the district's facilities in January of last year.

TRMC's numbers for March show a revenue of $6.4 million, a 23% gain over March of 2014, and expenses of $5.6 million, leaving an operating margin of $696,000, Germany said.

"For the last 12 months, it's all been positive," he said.

Germany credits more efficient administration, a reduction in labor costs and streamlining of purchasing for the turnaround. The year-to-year change amounts to $11 million of black ink for TRMC.

New rural clinics

TRMC is increasing its reach with new rural health care clinics. Its Lindsay Heathcare Center reopened in March, and the district opened two new clinics, one on West Street in Tulare and another in Earlimart, in April.

"It's something the community there have been wanting for a long time," said Dr. Benny Benzeevi, who manages TRMC for HCCA, of the Earlimart clinic. The clinic, which opened on April 23, is housed on the city's elementary school campus, a move designed to make it more accessible to the area's students and their families.

"They come to our hospital seeking better care," said Sherrie Bell, chair of the TRMC board of directors and president of the Tulare Local Health Care District. "The priority will be the children."

Expansion key to income

Still, there's room for improvement in TRMC's financial picture. The hospital served some 1,777 patients in its ER during March and is experiencing record high volume there at an average of 105 patients a day. Those numbers should increase and income with it, Germany said, once the expansion project is finished.

"We're looking forward to when the tower is complete," he said.

The original funding of $80 million for TRMC's four-story tower, which will eventually include an ER three times the size of the current facility, a maternity ward, a series of five patient suites and a helipad, was secured by a bond measure passed by voters in 2011. That money has since run out, and an additional $40-50 million is needed to complete construction.

Currently, construction is continuing slowly on the tower, with TRMC funding building out-of-pocket. Since October, TRMC has spent some $1.8 million on the project, with $400,000 in expenses still outstanding. Recent efforts have focused on getting the tower "dried in" by completing roofing and exterior plastering.

"Next step is to bid fire sprinklers and drywall," said Jack Stones, VP of construction for HCCA. "That'll take us ... to the final phase."

Do-or-die deadline

How the remaining construction will be funded is still in question. At its meeting last month, the TRMC board approved going to voters sometime in the next year to request a parcel tax that would cost property owners $184 annually per parcel. While there are fears voters could reject the proposal, which would require a two-thirds majority to pass, Tulare will find itself without a hospital should the tower remain incomplete. State law enacted following the Northridge Earthquake of 1994, stringent new seismic standards for hospitals, and TRMC must be in compliance by 2030 or face closure. Bell, however, said the hospital's new administration and stronger finances should reassure voters.

"We're in a totally different world, different management, different construction company," Bell said. "We need the community to support (construction of the tower). They have to or we have no hospital."

Tower rescued

Bell credits Stones with keeping construction moving forward while new funding is secured, reevaluating the expansion and updating construction plans.

"He really did rescue the project," she said.

Stones was able to combine the two sets of plans used to build the tower thus far, and has integrated more than 150 change orders. The white plastic wrap that once enclosed the tower is gone, replaced by the final plaster, and the roofing is complete, making the tower weatherproof and essentially completing its exterior.

"Everything is going very, very smooth," Stones said, adding that the tower can be completed within a year once funding is in place.

Stones, a veteran of the construction industry, has made some changes to the tower plans. Most prominent is the addition of five patient suites, designed with additional living space that would allow for families to stay with ill loved ones. Those suites will be directly above the expanded emergency room on the tower's north side. The changes, Stones said, came because of inadequacies in the original plans and an inefficient use of space.

"It all started with no restrooms on the fourth floor," he said. "You have to have bathrooms."

Viewpoint

May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

Dear Friends of the Alliance for Teen Health and Supporters of Teen Success,

The month of May is dedicated, nationally, as "Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month."

As Tulare County continues to struggle with teen pregnancy/parenting and STI (sexually transmitted infection) levels at or very near the top in California, the impact of these health issues is reflected in teen success at all levels: academic completion and graduation rates, economic independence and future job opportunities, parenting and family unity that can span many generations.

Our Alliance efforts and mission to address these issues include:

- Increasing community awareness and action through public programs and recognition events, bringing together like-minded programs, public and private agencies and individuals to focus on these issues, identify obstacles and develop solutions
- Implementing Comprehensive Sex Education Curricula in every Middle and High School district throughout Tulare County
- Expanding locations of and access to "Teen Friendly" Sexual and Reproductive Health Care providers in every community that will empower teens to make responsible/informed decisions before experiencing an unintended pregnancy or exposure to STIs.

Including Planned Parenthood (the experts in delivery of STI and Reproductive Health Care to youth across the country) access in Tulare County after decades of blocked attempts, has been a focus for expansion since their first introduction in 2006 as a weekly service for students in the COS Health Center. We are proud to announce the successful expansion and utilization of Planned Parenthood Clinic 3 days/week in the community at 211 N. Stevenson, Visalia as well as the on-going service at COS. Our next goal is to establish full time, six day-week Planned Parenthood services in Visalia with future expansion to other communities in Tulare County.

In recognition of National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month, your support (physical presence, not money) is requested in the Open House Invitation herein.

Wine tasting, alcohol-free beverages, catered appetizers, live music, and entertaining observation of Eric Gonzalez– an accomplished aerosol artist – during his creation of an art piece to display in the health clinic will enhance the event.

Tours of the clinic and interaction with their caring staff and regional managers will clarify any questions you may have. Information packets will be provided and raffle gifts, including a new 'cruiser' bicycle will be awarded.

Please include colleagues, friends and youth you may have contact with, in this invitation.

The more we know about teens and their sexual health care (that will have a lifetime impact), the better we can communicate and support them in their 'Journey to Success!)

We look forward to seeing you, if only for a few minutes, on Friday, May 15 between 4-7 pm.

In Celebration of Teen Success,
Merrilyn Brady
Merrilyn Brady and Rie Reniers
Alliance for Teen Health, Co-Founders

Kaweah Delta Earns An "A" Rating in Patient Safety

Lindsay Mann

Kaweah Delta has been given an "A," the top grade possible for patient safety. The score is based on how well hospitals protect patients from accidents, errors, injuries and infections.

Specifically, across 28 national measures of safety, the Leapfrog Group, a nationally recognized health care rating agency, measured Kaweah Delta against 2,500 U.S. hospitals and found we were in the top-tier of those following safe patient care practices. While we are quite proud of this accomplishment, we consider this only part of patient safety efforts.

Several examples of patient safety practices that have been implemented at Kaweah Delta include:

1. Through numerous processes and technologies we have demonstrated that we are able to prescribe exactly the right medications in the right amounts 100 percent of the time for heart attack and heart failure patients.
2. For pneumonia patients, we have ensured that blood cultures are done in a timely manner and that the right antibiotic is provided to treat pneumonia 100 percent of the time.
3. Relative to infection rates we are again better than state and national averages in the area of Central Line – Associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABSI). This effort has been made possible by the close collaboration of our physicians and nurses.

These are examples of the many efforts we are making, on a daily basis, to ensure our patients are being provided care by people who are deeply committed to patient safety. There is much yet to be done but we are pleased with our efforts thus far.

Kaweah Delta is the hospital of preference for patient safety and clinical quality in this community. We are operating at near capacity in both the medical center and the emergency department. We expect that demand will continue as people seek our services as we grow in vital areas such as neurosurgery, minimally invasive heart surgery, stroke management, cancer, cardiology, and orthopedics.

In response to this demand, we are exploring ways to create more areas to start the medical screening process for patients in our emergency department, possibly by expanding our triage area into the ED waiting room. We are also actively planning for the expansion of our emergency department, as well as the expansion and modernization of our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and the completion of the fifth and sixth floors of the Acequia Wing. This expansion will add an additional 48 beds to the medical center's current inpatient capacity of 404 beds.

We are also planning to replace the Mineral King Wing of our medical center. State law requires that by 2030 we can ensure that Kaweah Delta remains fully operational and available to provide services after a significant earthquake. We've now determined that we will need to replace the Mineral King Wing by essentially building a new replacement facility that can house the 273 hospital beds that we will no longer be able to use for acute care. You'll hear more about this very significant project as we proceed with our planning during this coming year.

These important projects are designed to give us greater capacity to meet the growing demand for our services. They will also give us the ability to provide our patients with state-of-the-art facilities, supported by the latest technologies which will enable our physicians, nurses, and other clinicians to provide the best care possible to our patients.

We are pleased to have our efforts in patient safety acknowledged by the Leapfrog Group. We are pleased to be an "A"-rated medical center. It is confirmation that our efforts have been effective – yet for us this is only a continuation of our journey in patient safety and clinical quality. As we add new medical services and expand our capacities to care for our patients, it reminds us that individualized care for the medical needs of each patient begins and ends with the capable and caring physicians, nurses, and clinicians who serve at Kaweah Delta. We invite you to join us as we continue our journey to provide safe and high-quality care to our patients at all times. This is our aspiration and the focus of our daily efforts.

"It shouldn't hurt to be a child. Be their voice"

"It shouldn't hurt to be a child. Be their voice". This is the message going out throughout Tulare County. April was Blue Ribbon Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in Tulare County and all over the nation. Behind this message is the belief that we are all responsible for all the children, not just our own.

Children in our country suffer. Everyday 5 children die, a number higher than in any other industrialized nation.

Three million, 3,000,000, reports of child abuse are made annually. In March, 2015, Tulare County Child Welfare Services received over 1,600 calls reporting child abuse or neglect.

In our county, approximately one thousand children live in foster homes or other out of home placements at a cost of over $1,000 per child per month.

It is well documented that adverse childhood experiences, including domestic violence, can result in poor physical health, addictions, emotional issues such as anger, depression, and suicidal tendencies.

Concerns about increasing gang violence, crime, court and prison cost, and other social problems can be traced to childhood abuse and neglect. And yet, people are more likely to support animal abuse prevention! Pictures of sad looking cats and dogs fill the newspaper.

There are no pictures of sad children needing an advocate, a foster home, or a phone call to Child Welfare Services (1-800-331-1585). Some people are classified as "Mandated Reporters", required by law to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

The law lists medical personnel, all school personnel, childcare providers, clergy, and others who are in contact with children as part of their job. The list even includes people who work with photos, who might be witness to child pornography.

Many of those under this law don't know they are under the law and if they do know it, they don't know how to make a report.

The Tulare County Child Welfare Services and the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council are partnering to make Mandated Reporter trainings available free to those who request the training. A request can be made by calling 624-8081. The goal is to help all mandated reporters in the county become knowledgeable about how to make a report.

And what about everyone else? We are all "morally" mandated reporters! We are all the eyes and ears for children unable to speak out.

Who else can bridge the gap between parents who fall short of their duties and children who are helpless to rescue themselves? An anonymous call can be made 24/7 to the CWS report line - 800-331-1585. If the child is in danger, the call is to 911. The child's safety is the first consideration.

What happens after the call? The last thing Child Welfare Services wants to do is to remove children from their homes. Can the family crisis be addressed and resolved? Can the family receive services that strengthen the family and provide adequate care of the children?

Family Resource Centers throughout the county provide preventive services to families in need. As a last resort, children will be placed in a safe environment outside the home.

Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council, a local nonprofit for 32 years, is working to change the culture in this county from one of disengagement to one that protects all children, from one of secrecy to one of openness and responsibility. Are you willing be a part of that change? If so, you can count yourself as one who is "for the child".

Billie Shawl, Coordinator
Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council

Columns & Letters

Letter: "Progressive Liberal Hack"

Ms Doe,

It's quite clear you're a progressive liberal hack from your previous columns; however, you've outdone yourself this time with some very snarky David Letterman type top 6er's for Republican candidates, Rubio, Paul and Cruz.

Ms Clinton, as you refer to her, looks to be the presumptive candidate ripe for a RECO indictment for her and slick Willy's very cleverly orchestrated la familia Clinton Global Initiative slush fund. It will be very interesting to observe how this mega millionaire, who's going to topple the 1%, gets through the knothole this time

I look forward to your six things we probably didn't know about Ms Clinton next edition. Perhaps you'll enlighten us as to where she was at 3 am when the phone range during the Bengazi attack.

Cheers
Wayne Millies

Letter: Porterville Residents Must Demand Answers

Dear Editor:

I can not understand why a hard working community, for example the residents of the City of Porterville, would continue to allow the city government to contract, at taxypayers expense, incompetent, dumb founded, stupid ignorant Lawyers (better know as liars) to defend abuses created by the same people they pay for. I filed civil action against five defendants, Porterville Police Sergeant Richard Standridge, Porterville City Manager John Lollis, Porterville Chief of Police Chuck McMillian (who was forced to resign over several allegations of MISCONDUCT), and the City of Porterville in the United States Federal District Court Eastern District of California on July of 2012 on Constitutional First Amendment Rights Violations. After consulting with six lawyers ("LIARS") they said it would be impossible for me to prevail. On March 18, 2015 case number 1:12-cv-01239-LJO-BAM titled as John Duran vs. City of Porterville, et al., was settled in Plaintiffs' favor, imagine that.

The defense arguements by, Ryan Nelson, of the firm NELSON and ROZIER based out of Visalia, California) Liar for the Defendants were dismissed at every step by the Honorable Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill. My reason for emphasizing on the waste of taxypayers' monies is supported by the imcompetent representation Nelson delivered. From the beginning of the case Nelson was arguing the wrong city ordinance, Nelson was forced to correct it. Nelson further argued that the case was frivolious, the case was Dismissed With Leave to Amend. On Amended Complaint the Plaintiff again prevailed. Nelson later filed a Motion for Summary Judgement to Dismiss, and it was 'DENIED", and again the Plaintiff prevailed. Finally, after making an offer to settle, Nelson attempted to sneek a a Settlement Agreement that was "rejected" by the Plaintiff due to a "Confidentialty Clause" that the Plaintiff never agreed too. As a result of Nelson's stupid mistake Plaintiff filed a Motion to Dismiss Counsel and Leave to Proceed Pro se allegding that the Counsel was not acting in the best interest of his client. The Motion was granted and Plaintiff's counsel was dismissed. (I wish I had more time to tell this portion of the proceedings). Again, the Plaintiff prevailed. At the initial Settlement Conference in private communication Plaintiff advised Nelson that if settlement was not reached, that Plaintiff was prepared to depose Defendant, (fired for misconduct, Chief of Police Chuck McMillian) and Nelson PLEASE NOTE: did not even know that McMillian was a Defendant in the action. Nelson was also advised that he too, would undergo deposition, for being incompetent.

The United State Magistrate specifically ordered that Plaintiff would file the final documents when Plaintiff received his monies. Well, guest what the fool of a Liar did and then lied too. He instructed Ken Wilkerson, with CSJV Risk Authority, Acclamation Insurance Management Services to make the draft payable to (the dismissed attorney) AND JOHN DURAN. In other words, Nelson violated a Federal Court Order. On top of this violation Nelson in the preparation of the Settlement Agreement, Nelson entered the wrong amount of the award. You have to ask yourself the question "where did this liar optain his license to practice law", Dumb and Dumber School of Liars? The draft was returned "void and rejected" by Plaintiff.

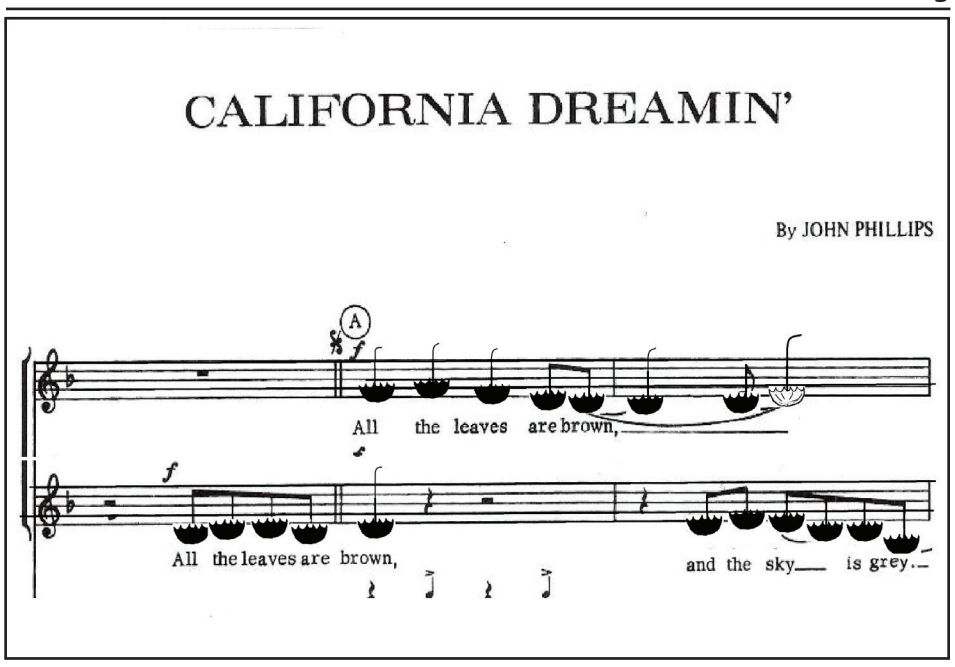
The residents of Porterville need to bring this abuse of taxpayers taxes before the City Council and demand that NELSON AND ROZIER be released from the existing contract and stop the rape and abuse of the citizens' tax dollars. As reader may be aware of who I am, I tend to respect everyone, so as long as they don't violate my rights or take advantage of taxpayers tax dollars. What Nelson need to be aware of is this, I will do what ever it takes to revisit the wrongful shootings surrounding the City of Porterville if he continues to act on stupidity.

John Duran

Forget the next deadline — Mother's Day is May 10

Black Tie

Alex Oldenbourg



Veteran's Corner

VA Fiduciary Program

Joe Wright

The VA Fiduciary Program provides oversight of VA's most vulnerable beneficiaries who are unable to manage their benefits because of injury, disease, advanced age, or are under 18 years of age. A fiduciary is an individual or entity who has been appointed by VA to receive benefits on behalf of a beneficiary for the use and benefit of the beneficiary and the beneficiary's dependents. VA appoints fiduciaries who manage benefits for these beneficiaries and conducts oversight to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the beneficiaries they serve.

It is VA's policy that every beneficiary has the right to manage his or her VA benefits. However, in cases where medical evidence indicates that the beneficiary cannot manage their benefits, VA may decide that the beneficiary needs the assistance of a fiduciary. This determination may also be made based upon notice that a court has appointed a guardian for the beneficiary. VA's decision that a beneficiary needs a fiduciary may be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

In deciding who should act as fiduciary for a beneficiary, VA will always select the most effective and least restrictive fiduciary arrangement. This means that VA will first consider whether the beneficiary can manage their benefits with limited VA supervision under supervised direct pay. VA will consider the choice of the beneficiary, then the beneficiary's spouse, family members, friends, or caregivers who are qualified and willing to provide fiduciary services for the beneficiary without a fee or, a temporary fiduciary, if necessary. As a last resort, VA will consider appointment of a paid fiduciary.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

THE VALLEY VOICE IS YOUR NEWSPAPER
Published by The Valley Voice, LLC.
Publisher/Editor: Joseph Oldenbourg
joseph@ourvalleyvoice.com

Staff:
Catherine Doe, writer (catherine@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Tony Maldonado, webmaster (tony@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Nancy Vigran, sales (nancy@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Stefan Barros, sports (stefan@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Dave Adalian, writer (dave@ourvalleyvoice.com)

Contact us & share your opinion: www.ourvalleyvoice.com
3350 South Fairway • Visalia, CA 93277

On Facebook at facebook.com/ourvalleyvoice

Print replica edition at issuu.com/ourvalleyvoice

FREE Cardiac Screenings

You're Invited to

BeHeartSmart

FREE Screenings available

(Need to fast for 4 hours prior to screening)

- ☑ Carotid Screening
- ☑ PAD screening
- ☑ Glucose/Cholesterol
- ☑ Foot Screening with Dr. Florek
- ☑ Balance Screening
- ☑ Pulmonary Screening
- ☑ Murmur Screening

Informational Booths

Sleep Disorders

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Stroke

Nutrition

Diabetes

Please Note:

Health Screenings start at 8:00 a.m.

Light refreshments will be provided

Reservations **are required for PAD & Carotid Screenings*

Call 1 (877) 529-3241

Kaweah Delta Family Medicine Center

A division of Kaweah Delta Health Care District

SATURDAY, MAY 16 | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Visalia Family Medicine Center

202 W. Willow, Visalia, CA

Valley Voice
Valley Scene

Bob Goff to Speak at Rescue Mission Benefit

Staff Reports

The Visalia Rescue Mission's Inaugural Spring Benefit will feature New York Times Best Selling Author Bob Goff as its keynote speaker on Tuesday, May 12. Goff, author of Love Does, is an attorney who founded Restore International, a non-profit human rights organization operating in Uganda, India and Somalia.

Goff is a sought after speaker for leadership, church and university events, inspiring current and future influencers to get to the "do" part of life. Choosing to live audaciously, Bob connects to audiences in a powerfully inspirational, yet down to earth manner.

VRM: What's your favorite thing about public speaking?

BOB GOFF: I tell stories like Jesus did. He talked about sheep and wheat and everyone knew what he was talking about. And I always look at whoever is in the fourth row but it always seems like there's someone sitting in that row who doesn't want to be there. I tell stories to that person with the intent to connect, hoping they get something out of it. I'll stick around afterwards with the hope that a shared story connected.

VRM: You wrote in your book, "I used to want to fix people, but now I just want to be with them." How can we walk a healthy balance so people get the help they need, but aren't enabled to remain in a broken situation?

BOB: The first thing that comes to mind, is the power we have to speak things into being. We don't pause long enough to stop and tell people what we see in them. Take a 6" mirror up to people and ask them to tell you what they see. They'll start seeing things in themselves what you see in them. Jesus called Peter a rock, not a wuss for denying him. If the path doesn't lead you to the poor, you're not following Jesus.

VRM: So that's the mark of a Jesus follower?

BOB: Just give love away, instead of being stingy. It all evaporates when you're stingy. Be extravagant and take time with people. The more available I am, the more humble I am. Bottom line: love everybody always.

VRM: Even attorneys?

BOB: [Laughs] Start with people you don't understand. Learn their name. God makes people, people make issues, but people aren't issues.

Goff pioneered the vision of Restore International to fight for freedom and

human rights, working to improve educational opportunities and to be helpful to those in need of a voice and a friend. Restore has worked with Uganda's judiciary in bringing more than 200 cases to trial, as well as pursuing justice, intervention and education for at risk women and children in Uganda, India and Somalia.

Restore Leadership Academy in Northern Uganda educates more than 300 students with a focus on character and leadership development. Because of Goff's vision and the work of Restore International, he serves as the Hon. Consul for the Republic of Uganda to the United States.

Goff has been a practicing attorney for over 25 years. He is an adjunct professor at Pepperdine Law School where he teaches Nonprofit Law, and Point Loma Nazarene University where he teaches Business Law.

The event takes place at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 300 W. Main St. Visalia.

Appetizers, drinks and desserts from downtown restaurants (included with ticket) will be served beginning at 5:30pm. The main event starts at 7pm. To get tickets by phone, call 625-1369..

Country Star Jimmy Wayne Highlights CASA's Annual Dinner/Auction

Donna Orozco

To celebrate CASA's 30th anniversary, the agency is bringing country star and award-winning author Jimmy Wayne to its "Once Upon a Dream" annual gala dinner and auction on Friday, May 15 at the Visalia Convention Center.

Dinner by the Vintage Press will be followed with music by Wayne along with silent and live auctions.

Another highlight will be a drawing to win a 1999 6-speed red convertible, donated by Bill Pine. Only 250 tickets at $100 each will be sold, so the odds are good.

Jimmy Wayne is a former foster kid turned country music singer/songwriter whose songs and story about growing up as a victim of child abuse bring awareness to kids who age out of the foster system and become homeless. He won awards for his songs "Do You Believe Me Now?" and "Paper Angels." The latter helped promote the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program where Jimmy got his first guitar.

In 2010, Wayne walked half way across America to raise awareness for kids aging out of the system. In 2012, he helped get the bill passed extending the age of foster care from 18 to 21 in California and Tennessee. His best-selling autobiography "Walk to Beautiful" details his rise from a childhood full of abuse and abandonment.

Jimmy Wayne

Sponsors are needed. For tickets and information, call (559) 625-4007.

CASA is the acronym for Court Appointed Special Advocates. CASA of Tulare County is a local 501(c)3 non-profit agency established in 1984 by a grass roots effort led by Juvenile Court Referee, the late, George Thurlow. CASA is a national organization which started in 1977 in Seattle, Washington when a concerned judge needed more information to make life-changing decisions about the future of children in the dependency court. CASA of Tulare County's misssion is: To speak up for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect - advocating for their safety and well-being by training community volunteers to represent their best interest and be their voice in court. CASA's message is simply "I am for the Child."

Porterville's Elegant Zalud House is Newest Tulare County Treasure

Laurie Schwaller

The historic Zalud House Museum in Porterville is the latest addition to the Tulare County Treasures (TCT) website. TCT celebrates the unique history and attractions of Tulare County's host of conserved places.

The all-volunteer team has created the website to bring together in one convenient location the stories of places throughout the county that have been preserved for public enjoyment. In many cases, these treasure tales are accompanied by videos that bring to life these special places as the people who played leading roles in conserving them tell their stories.

The Zalud House and all its contents were bequeathed to the city of Porterville by Pearle Zalud, the last remaining member of an ill-fated historic family that settled in the city more than 100 years ago. The elegant home at the corner of Hockett and Morton Streets has a fascinating past that involves tales of gambling, scandal, murder, bootlegging and visitations from the spirits of those long dead.

When Pearle died in 1970 she also willed 15 acres of property and several thousand dollars to Porterville for a park to be named for her beloved brother. It is now the Edward Zalud Park at El Granito and Grand Streets.

After several years of repair work, the Zalud House Museum was opened to the public on May 2, 1977. The two-story brick structure is built in Second Empire style, with a distinctive mansard roof. It contains a collection of the family's keepsakes from world travel, works of art, closets full of vintage clothing and interesting furnishings. The kitchen features two sets of cook stoves because the home's builder, John Zalud, and his wife, Mary Jane, both loved to cook.

Posting of the Zalud House story and pictures brings to 30 the number of treasures that have been featured

ZALUD continued on **18 »**

Porterville Fair Opens May 13

Fair season kicks off with the opening of the 67th Porterville Fair on May 13.

Themed "Chicks Dig It," the fair runs Wednesday through Sunday with livestock judging, indoor and commercial exhibits, and outdoor rides and attractions.

4-H and FFA livestock competition begins with dairy goats, hogs and pygmy goats on Wednesday; and lamb, beef cattle, rabbits, poultry and dairy cattle on Thursday. The Junior Livestock auction takes place Saturday at 10 am.

Other competitions include horticulture with nursery stock, hanging baskets, terrariums and plant arrangements. There is also a cotton modeling competition.

A "community tradition," the Porterville is one of a few fairs within the state that is managed as a non-profit organization.

The Porterville Fair is open Wednesday and Thursday from 6 am-11 pm, Friday and Saturday from 6am-12pm and Sunday noon-11pm. Rides and outdoor attractions are open Wednesday-Friday from 4pm-closing, Saturday and Sunday from noon-closing.

Daily admission is $8/adults, $6/seniors, $4/children (6-12) and children under 6 are free. Season passes are available for $30/adults, $20/seniors and $15/children (6-12). Unlimited ride wristbands are $22 in advance, or $27 during the fair.

For more information, visit www.portervillefair.com, or call (559) 781-6582.

Zalud

Continued from p. 17

on the TCT site since the project began about three and one half years ago. Short, award-winning video interviews with visionary people who worked to protect these diverse sites have been produced on 10 of the treasures and supplemental articles of other features have been added to five.

"This is a work in progress," said project chair Laurie Schwaller, of Three Rivers. "We're nearing the halfway point of completing webpages for our listed Treasures. We have found that many of these special places are unknown and underappreciated by the people who live here. It is our goal to increase the awareness of locals and tourists alike about all there is to do in our beautiful back yard."

Treasures range from scenic attractions to historical buildings, farm property and open space preserves, as well as local, state and national parks. The website's list of treasures to visit is presented in many forms – alphabetically, by geographic location, in a chronological timeline and by activity – hiking, biking, birding, camping, water sports, etc.

A key feature of the site are interactive maps that display treasures both county-wide and in each quadrant of the county, making it easier for users to plan day trips that will take them to more than one location in an outing.

The team can be contacted through the website: www.tularecountytreasures.org, or on the TCT Facebook page.

Wine & Beer Tasting
At
Redwood Room
Totem Market & Gifts
BBQ & Deli
J&J Cellars - Kelsey See Canyon Vineyards
(559) 561-4463
45186 Sierra Drive, Three Rivers

Three Rivers Music Festival
Saturday, May 9
11 am – 10 pm
350906
11 am – 5 pm
Loads of Kids' Crafts and Activities
An Emergency Aid Alliance Benefit
Lions Arena ▪ Three Rivers
No coolers ▪ No pets ▪ Over 21 must show ID at gate
$17 at the gate ▪ Children 12 and under FREE
Ticket info available at 3r-aid.org or call 561-4021
www.facebook.com/ThreeRiversMusicFestival
Party With a Purpose
Bluegrass
Americana
Folk
Rock
Blues
World
Beer & Wine Bar
Food by Chef Ryan Rusie
All Fired Up Pizza
Silent Auction
Artisans

More than 40 years in Downtown Visalia
MICHAEL'S Custom Jewelry
559-734-7079
316 W. Main St., Visalia, CA 93291
www.michaelscustomjewelry.com

Certified Gemologist Appraiser
COMPLIMENTARY CLEANING AND INSPECTION OF YOUR JEWELRY
3-D DESIGNS
CERTIFIED APPRAISALS
RING SIZING
RESTRINGING
WATCH REPAIR
WATCH BATTERIES
WATCH BANDS
STONE REPLACEMENT
PRONG RETIPPING
FREE GIFT WRAPPING WITH PURCHASE

Great Conversations

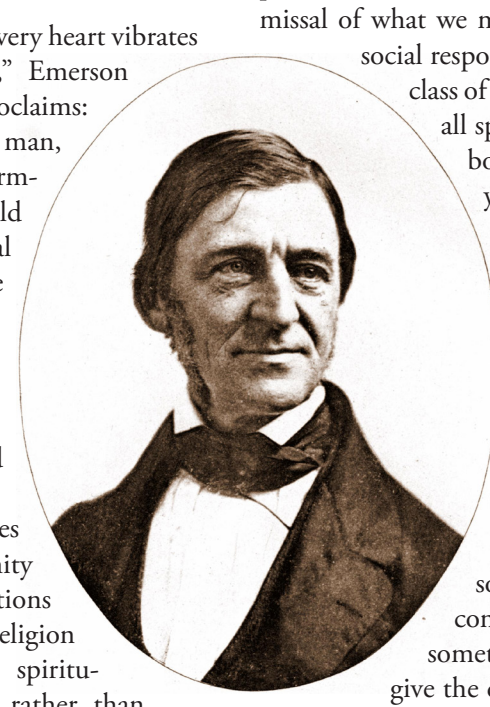
Emerson's "Self-Reliance": Moving Beyond Aphorisms

Joseph R. Teller

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) is considered the father of American Transcendentalism, a philosophical movement (originally a reaction against Harvard-flavored Unitarianism) which believed in the inherent goodness of nature and of humanity, and which celebrated the power of the self-reliant, radically individual soul as a unique expression of divinity itself.

The COS Great Books group discussed Emerson's "Self-Reliance" at our last meeting, a text which is foundational to transcendentalism in its advocacy of the sovereign individual completely free of the shackles of tradition, conformity, and community.

"Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string," Emerson magisterially proclaims: "Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is as sacred as your own mind."



Emerson believes that slavish conformity to intellectual traditions or institutional religion is inimical to true spiritual growth. Indeed, rather than being imprisoned by others' opinions, the only criterion against which our beliefs or actions should be measured, according to Emerson, is our own whim: "Good and bad are but names very readily transferrable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it."

The self-reliant individual should even be free of intellectual or argumentative consistency, as Emerson proclaims in an oft-quoted passage: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines."

Our group was strongly critical of Emerson's ideas. One reason is Emerson's own glaring inconsistencies: after all, throughout his essay (which argues against tradition), Emerson refers glowingly to Moses, Milton and Shakespeare (founders of major traditions), and he seems to have no problem arguing that readers should conform to his own ideas, but not those of others.

In the end, though, our group's larger criticism of Emerson was more deeply philosophical—not surprising in an age where many of us have witnessed the pernicious effects of political philosophies that romanticize a version of "self-reliance" freed from any sense of community or the common good.

Most of us had problems, for example, with Emerson's aloof and elitist dismissal of what we might consider basic social responsibility: "There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold…but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meetinghouses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousandfold relief societies—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold." If the cost of Emersonian "self-reliance" is our sense of moral obligation to the communities in which we live—whether civic, social, intellectual, or spiritual—perhaps we're better off getting a refund.

Whatever one's political or spiritual predilections, "Self-Reliance" and its sentiments have had a profound effect on our national consciousness. And like many great works, Emerson's essay invites us to think through questions crucial to our sense of social and individual identity: what does it mean to be "self-reliant?"

How does our picture of divinity or the transcendent affect our understanding of ourselves and others? To what extent are we obligated to our communities, and when do such obligations infringe on our freedom? What hold should the great intellectual or spiritual traditions have on us--and when should we shake off tradition and strike out on our own?

Visalia Chamber of Commerce
2013 Visalia Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year
Gerald M. Schneider
D.D.S.
General Dentistry
559.627.0292
100 N. Stevenson
Visalia, CA 93291

Education

VUSD Graduation Rates Continue to Climb

Staff Reports

Last week State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson reported California's cohort graduation rate climbed for the fifth year in a row in 2014 to a record high. In California, of students who started high school in 2010-11, 80.8% graduated with their class in 2014, up 0.4 of a percentage point from the year before.

The California graduation rate has increased substantially since the class of 2010 posted a 74.7% rate.

"I am very excited to announce that the graduation rate in Visalia Unified School District has also climbed for the fifth year in a row to a record high of 92%," said Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) Superintendant Dr. Craig Wheaton. "We jumped 3.7% in just one year; and in comparison to the state average, we are 11.2% higher."

In 2010, the VUSD graduation rate was at 80.3%.

"We work each day to make our goal of 'Every Student Succeeds' a reality," Wheaton said. "We still have a lot of work to do to support the few that are not successful. I agree with Superintendent Torlakson who said that despite the great work that has been done, there is still much to do. I challenge educators, parents, students and community leaders to continue the hard work needed to help every student graduate."

For more information regarding California's graduation rates, visit the California Department of Education website at http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr15/yr15rel34.asp.

PC Opens Registration for S.M.A.R.T Lab

Registration is now open for the 2015 Porterville College Foundation's summer S.M.A.R.T. Lab (Science, Mathematics and Resource Technology) program.

Four three-day sessions are being offered: June 8-11, 22-25 and July 6-9, 20-23. Don't miss out on these fun-filled sessions focusing on life, physical and earth science for kids entering grades 4th-6th.

All sessions will take place from 8 to noon. Cost is $25 and includes mid-morning snack, T-shirt, materials, workbook and textbook of student's choice. A reduction in registration is available through the generous donation of the Edison International STEM Scholarship.

A limited number of scholarships are available through a generous donation by the Zonta Club of Porterville. Eligibility requires a teacher recommendation.

Space is limited. Register early in the PC Business Office, 100 E. College Avenue. For more information, call (559) 791-2319 or email cbodine@portervillecollege.edu.

WHCCD Recognized for Innovation in Higher Education Award in Sacramento

West Hills Community College District administrators traveled to Sacramento to receive recognition following West Hills being named one of the winners of the California Innovation Award for Higher Education.

The committee overseeing the Innovation Awards met to vote on approval of the spending plan submitted by West Hills and the 14 other colleges honored.

West Hills was recognized with the award for its unique advance-registration innovation, Reg365, which was launched in 2014 and allows students to register for a full year of classes at once. The honor comes with $2.5 million, which will be put toward further innovation including advances in distance education, professional development, student schedule planning and student success.

West Hills College Coalinga President Carole Goldsmith, West Hills College Lemoore President Don Warkentin, Chancellor Frank Gornick, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Workforce Development Stuart Van Horn visited the capital to represent West Hills.

Registration Open for West Hills College District

Staff Reports

Open registration for students attending West Hills College Lemoore, West Hills College Coalinga and North District Center, Firebaugh began on May 4.

Utilizing the district's innovative Reg365 registration program, students are able to register for a full year of classes at one time.

This is the second year that Reg365 has been in effect and it has proven to be popular with students.

The West Hills Community College District offers a variety of opportunities for students who enroll, including a wide range of academic and vocational programs, scholarships and staff and faculty who are committed to the relentless pursuit of student success.

Students can enroll in programs including agriculture science and technology, nursing, psychiatric technician training and culinary arts.

Students also have abundant transfer opportunities and the ability to either prepare for a career by earning a technical certificate or Associate Degree, or to earn credits for transfer to a four-year university.

There is also a guaranteed transfer agreement with schools in the California State University system for students who earn associate degrees in a variety of subjects.

For more information about West Hills Community College District and what it can offer to students, visit www.westhillscollege.com.

Our family serving yours since 1973
Casa Grande
Senior Care Home & Assisted Living
www.casagrandeseniorcarehomes.com
347 E. Walnut, Visalia (559) 733-0233

Palmer Company Insurance
HOME • AUTO • FARM
COMMERCIAL • LIFE • HEALTH
(559) 562-2522 111 W. Honolulu, Lindsay
IBA WEST

A&W ALL AMERICAN FOOD

EXETER
420 N. Kaweah Ave.
HANFORD
1675 W. Lacey Blvd.
1113 10th Ave.
TULARE
133 North J St.
VISALIA
301 S. Willis St.
2611 S Mooney Blvd.
2124 W. Riggins Ave

NEW
DELI BURGER
PASTRAMI MUSHROOM ONION SWISS

THE GREATEST THING SINCE SLICED MEAT
Prices & offers subject to change. Tax extra. ©2015 A&W Restaurants, Inc.

Calendar

Every Third Tuesday, Monthly: The League of Women Voters of Tulare County meets, 11:45am
Enjoy lunch and a discussion at Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center in Visalia. A fixed price luncheon for $13.00 inc. tax and tip will be served. The public is welcome. Reservations are required by calling 734-6501.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 W Visalia Road in Farmersville

Through June 4: Women of Tulare County
This exhibit showcases these extraordinary women of Tulare County from 1855 to the present through a series of posters. Women featured include Josephine Allensworth, Anna Mills Johnston, Eleanor Calhoun, Ina Stiner, Annie Mitchell, Mary Garcia Pohot, Rose Ann Vuich, Jean Shepard, Lali Moheno, and Ester Hernandez. This exhibit is on the second floor of the Visalia Branch of the Tulare County Library outside of the Annie R. Mitchell History Room through June 4 and be. Exhibit hours are from 1--5pm, Tuesday--Friday. For more information on this exhibit, please contact Lisa Raney at 713-2723 or the reference desk at 713-2703. The Visalia Library is located at 200 W. Oak Ave, Visalia, CA 93291.

Through June: Visalia Branch Library Teen Homework Center, 3-6:30pm
The Visalia Branch Library offers a place for teens to do their homework Tuesdays through Fridays. The library is located at 200 W. Oak St.

Through June: Tulare Public Library Homework Help
Homework help for children in grades K-12 will be available in the Tulare Public Library Learning Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays from 1-4pm.

Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

May 1-29: Expressions of Lived Experience Art Show, 4-8pm
Mental health consumers with "The No Stigma Speakers Bureau" share their stories at 5:30pm, and the art reception begins at 6:30pm at the Arts Consortium, 400 N. Church, Visalia. The art show is open to the public all month long.

MAY

May 8: Business Seminar Series Diversity Training, 3:30-5pm
At the train depot/Lemoore Chamber. Tickets $15 for members, $20 for non-members. For more information call (559) 924-6401.

May 8: Youth Track & Field Tulare County Qualifier Meet, 4:30
Porterville Parks & Leisure will host the meet, which will take place at Granite Hills High School in Porterville, 1701 W. Putnam Avenue. Gates open at 3:45pm and events start at 4:30pm. There is a $2 admission fee for all participants and spectators.

May 8: Girls Night Out: Tacos, Salsa, Margaritas, and Laughter! by Candace's Catering, 6:30pm
This is the perfect cooking event to gather your girls together for a relaxing night that combines all your favorite things: Food, Friends, and Laughter. You'll learn some new twists on tacos, salsas, and margaritas using locally grown produce. Learning to cook will be so much fun! This fun, interactive night out will fill the barn with laughter, and satisfy your soul at Ivanhoe's Historic Seven Sycamore Ranch. Cost: $30 per person. Reserve your group of six or more by April 24 and save $5 per person.

May 8: The Usuals, 8-10pm
Hear the classic rock sounds of The Usuals at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, Lemoore. For more information call 816-0019.

May 9: 15th Annual Car & Motorcycle Show, 8am
The Rollin' Relics Car Club of Porterville 15th Annual Car & Motorcycle Show will take place on the corner of Henderson and Newcomb. Registration is from 8 to 10am, and the show is at 9am to 3pm. Pre-registration fee is $25 and $30 on the day of the show, which includes event T-shirt and dash plaque. For more show information call Mike @ (559) 310-7136 or Jim @ (559) 789-0120.

May 9: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

May 9: Exeter's 12th Annual Garden Walk, 9am-2pm
Exeter, famous for its murals and known as one of America's Prettiest Painted Places is hosting its 12th Annual Full Bloom Garden Walk. Visitors are invited to explore beautiful and unique private gardens in and around the Exeter area. Be sure and take time to enjoy some refreshments hosted by Exeter's 2012 Business of the Year, By the Water Tower Antiques, relax in the ambiance of their lovely Victorian garden, 141 South B Street. Tickets, $20.00 in advance, are available in Exeter at the Exeter Chamber of Commerce and at By the Water Tower Antiques. Tickets will be available the day of the event, only at By the Water Tower Antiques.

May 9: New Planets!! 1pm
Make and launch a rocket to the Asteroid Belt. Play a board game to get your rocket to new planets Vesta and Ceres! Explore the planets at ImagineU With a NASA ambassador in March, April and May**.** ImagineU Children's Museum is excited to have its very own NASA/Jet Propulsion Lab solar system ambassador, Susan Morrison, coming to Visalia to teach science in a fun, interactive way. These Saturday events are free with admission price (free for members). ImagineU is located at 700 E. Main St., Visalia. It is open Wednesday through Friday from 10-4 and Saturday from 12-4. Cost is $5 for adults and children 2 and over. Children under 2 are free. For more information, call 733-5975 or go to www.imagineumuseum.com

May 9: Barks & Bourbon, 5:30-10pm
Friends of Tulare Animal Services is having its First Annual Barks & Bourbon to be held on May 9,2015, at Heritage Center Social Hall. Friends of Tulare Animals Services is the non-profit arm of Tulare Animal Services. We are a 501(c)(3), and are totally self funded through donations. We are raising funds to support our growing rescue efforts of shelter animals. Contributions to Friends of Tulare Animal Services are fully tax-deductible.

May 9: "An American Tribute," 7:30pm
The COS Vocal Music Department will be presenting an evening of folk songs, spirituals and patriotic American music in their Season Finale Choral Concert, featuring some foot stomping American Spirituals. The concert will conclude with a tribute to World War I, Flanders Fields and will close with "America the Beautiful." For reservations and information, the COS Box Office is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from Noon to 5pm. (559) 730-3907

May 10: Cloudship, 8-10pm
Hear the acoustic pop of Cloudship at Farmer's Fury Tasting Room, 358 West D Street, Lemoore. For more information call 816-0019.

May 10: Mother's Day Brunch, 9am-noon
Mother's day is the time to show gratitude to moms of all ages and what better way to make her day special than to treat her to a delicious brunch hosted by St Anthony's Retreat in the beautiful foothills in Three Rivers? Cost is $14 for adults and $7 for Children 12 and under. For reservations please call 559-561-4595 43816 Sierra Drive, Three Rivers

May 10: A Musical Tribute To Mom, 2pm
The COS Instrumental Music Department is pleased to celebrate Mother's Day with a musical tribute to Mom. The concert will feature the COS Jazz and Symphonic Band. Mothers get in free. For reservations and information, the COS Box Office is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from Noon to 5pm. (559) 730-3907

May 11: Great Conversations-- excerpt from *Democracy in America*, 4-5:30pm
A discussion of this Great Work by Tocqueville will take place on the COS main campus in Hospital Rock 133.

May 12: Paris Nights: Crepes, Crepes, and more Crepes by Candace's Catering, 6:30-8pm
Crepes have so many possibilities! During this fun, and interactive Paris-themed cooking demonstration, you'll learn to make different kinds of crepes, as well as preparing and putting together crepes as main dishes, snacks, and desserts. This is the perfect cooking event for every one of all ages. You'll be dreaming about walking the sidewalks of Paris as you bite into your crepe. But you'll really be in the glass barn at Ivanhoe's Historic Seven Sycamore Ranch. Cost: $30 per person.

May 13: Lemoore Chamber of Commerce Luncheon, Noon
At Tachi Palace, the guest speaker will be Debbie Gullord. For reservations call 924-6401

May 13: Take-Out Dinner Fund-raiser, 5-8pm
Visalia Parks & Recreation Foundation will hold a take-out dinner fund-raiser at Rosa's Italian Ristorante. Tickets are $10 per person and includes one quart of spaghetti and garlic bread. To purchase tickets, call 713-4599 or email carolhhays@gmail.com.

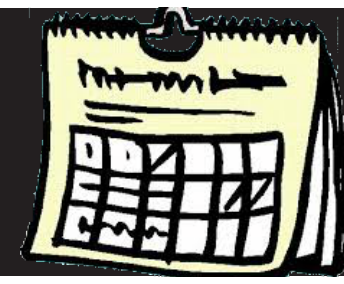
May 14: 38th Armenian Food Festival, 11am-2pm & 5-8pm
St. Mary Armenian Church of Yettem will be hosting their 38th Armenian Food Festival for the Visalia community at the Visalia Elks Lodge at 3100 W. Main St. Lunch will be served from 11 am until 2 pm and dinner will be available between 5 pm and 8 pm. Price for either a drive thru, take out or inside dining meal is $14.

May 14: "Homecoming" at Hanford's Thursday Night Market Place, 5:30-9pm
Music: Brian Smart and the Country Outlaws (country)

May 15: TCOE presents Slick Rock Student Film Festival, Noon to Midnight
Premiere Screening and Awards Ceremony at Visalia Fox Theater. The Slick Rock Student Film Festival is Central California's premier film competition for middle and high school students in Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare counties. It is a program of the Tulare County Office of Education with support from the Tulare & Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force. Slick Rock challenges students to meet industry standards in the technical aspects of film production. The competition is divided into two levels: middle school and high school. Each level offers a variety of film genres for participation. For more information, contact Slick Rock staff at slickrock@tcoe.org.

May 15: Planned Parenthood Open House, 4-7pm
The month of May is dedicated nationally as "TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION MONTH." The more we know about teens and their sexual health care (that will have a lifetime impact), the better we can communicate and support them in their "Journey to Success." The Visalia Health Center at 211 N. Stevenson St. welcomes anyone who wishes to learn about low-cost, confidential health services. RSVP at (559) 441-2751 by May 13.

May 16: Lemon Cove Women's Club Armed Forces Tribute, 9am-1pm
Enjoy a picnic lunch--or take out from--the historic Pogue Hotel, 32792 Sierra Dr. in Lemon Cove. Lunch is $10, and all proceeds maintain/update the historic building.



May 16: FHCN Health Fair, 10am-2pm
Get free health screenings at Hanford Civic Park, 400 N. Douty Street. For more information contact Francisca Camarena at (559) 909-2130.

May 16: 6th Annual Rezmade Car Show, 10am-6pm
Doors open at 10am. Show time is at 11am. General admission is $25 — kids 10 and under are free. To register your ride, go to rezmadecarclub.com. For more information, go to tachipalace.com or call 866-4PALACE.

May 16: Pioneer Days, Noon-5pm
In Hanford Civic Park, locals will celebrate with bed races, a rib cook-off and health fair. Bed race teams are comprised of one rider and four runners. Entries should be made prior to the event. All racers must be 18. Bed Race entry fee is $50 per team. Winners will receive $500; second place receives $250. A trophy for the best looking bed will also be given. The rib cook-off is open to any teams. Prior registration is required. Ribs must be raw and unseasoned prior to the start of the cook off. Each team is comprised of the chief cook and as many assistants as he deems appropriate for the team, who can work in their 10 x 20-foot cooking space. Chief cook meeting is at 8am – turn in rib time is 1:30pm. For more information on events and contests, contact the Hanford Chamber, (559) 582-0483.

May 16: A Musical Salute To Broadway, 2 & 7:30pm
Golden West High School Choral Arts presents "There's No Business Like Show Business" A Musical Salute to Broadway at Visalia's L.J. Williams Theater. This fully choreographed show will feature Golden West Choirs and soloists singing music from such shows as: Wicked, Little Shop of Horrors, Hairspray, Cabaret, Spamalot, Fiddler on the Roof, South Pacific, Paint Your Wagon, Les Misérables and more. General Admission tickets are available for $8, with Seniors Citizens and Students with ID $5. Tickets are available at GWHS, online at the GWHS Webstore, or at the Theater the prior to performance time. For more information please contact the Golden West Performing Arts Office at (559) 622-3138

May 16: Hallelujah Hoedown, 4-6:30pm
The Lemoore United Methodist Church hosts a food and music filled event at their church, 500 E. Bush Street. For more information call (559) 924-5295.

May 16: Chris & Brian Faria Memorial--King of the West 410
Sprint Car Series, USAC West Coast 360 Sprint Cars, Western RaceSaver Sprints will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

May 16: A Night At the Races, 5pm

At the Lemoore Raceway, this event profits the Brando Fund and the Kings County Deputy Officer's Association.

May 18: One Ballgame Without Shoes, 1pm
Bring a new (or slightly used) pair of shoes for the VRM at Visalia Rawhide's May18 game to receive admission to the game in the Cold Zone section & be entered to win a $100 TOMS gift card! The Visalia Rawhide will donate $5 to the VRM for every pair of shoes donated.

May 19: Meal Prep: Improve Your Wellness by Planning to Eat Healthy, 6:30-7:30pm
During this fun, interactive demonstration put on by Brooke Musselman, you'll see how easy it is to prepare your meals in advance in just one afternoon. Meal prep is the hottest trend for those who find it hard to find the time to eat healthy. This workshop will show you how to prepare your meals in advance, so you're more likely to eat better. This one hour workshop at Ivanhoe's Historic Seven Sycamore Ranch is designed to give you the ideas you need to get on the path of healthy eating. Cost: $15 per person.

May 20: Learn Compression-only CPR, 8am-5pm
In observation of National Emergency Medical Services Week, American Medical Response (AMR) operations across the country will train thousands of people to save lives at Rawhide Park through compression-only CPR. Compression-only CPR is easy to learn and has the ability to keep a cardiac arrest victim alive until paramedics arrive.

May 21: "Night of Giving" at Hanford's Thursday Night Market Place, 5:30-9pm
Celebrate volunteerism with the music of Rockville (classic rock)

May 21: Special Tea Party Meeting, 6pm
Special guest speakers include Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux and DA Tim Ward. Tulare Masonic Lodge 135 W. Tulare Ave, Tulare, CA 93274 info -Michele Moore 688-4323

May 25: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

May 26: 50th Anniversary Celebration, 5-9pm
The academics and staff at the UC-ANR Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center invites you to attend a celebration. We greatly appreciate your support of the Center over the years and we look forward to a rich future addressing critical research and extension needs to help maintain California's position as the top agricultural state in the U.S. and the world. If you plan to attend, please RSVP at http://ucanr.edu/KearneyRSVP.

May 27: Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) information night, 6-7pm
The Visalia Chambers of Commerce will host a Young Entrepreneurs Academy(-YEA!) information session at 220 N. Santa Fe St., Visalia for students currently in grades 7-12, their families, and local business leaders about YEA!--a yearlong program that guides middle and high school students through launching and running their own real businesses or social movements!

May 29: Date Night: A Taste of Italy, 6:30pm
Spend an evening learning to create the favorite flavors of Italy with your partner. Cooking together is an intimate experience, and the most romantic flavors to taste together are the ones from Italy. Bring your camera and take advantage of Ivanhoe's Historic Seven Sycamore Ranch, a ibeautiful venue that is filled with romantic photo opportunities. Whether it's a new love or you're forever in love, this fun, interactive date night on the farm, which will bring you closer as you explore the tastes of Italy together. You will learn how to make gnocchi, limoncello, tiramisu, and more. Cost: $100 per couple.

May 28: "Baseball Fever Night" at Hanford's Thursday Night Market Place, 5:30-9pm
Support you favorite team jersey with the music of Glen Delpit and Subterraneans (American roots)

May 29: Rawhide Baseball Game, 7pm
Through a partnershipwith the Visalia Rawhide, Mental Health Awareness will be highlighted for the fourth year in a row at the ballpark.

May 30: USAC West Coast 360 Sprints
USAC West Coast 360 Sprints, USAC Western Midgets, Western RaceSaver Sprints and Vintage Cars will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

May 31: Southern Gospel music concert, 6pm
The First Baptist Church of Dinuba is pleased to be hosting a concert on May 31 featuring "Keepers Of The Faith Ministry". KOTF is a nationally known quartet from the state of Washington who has become a "Fan Favorite" wherever they go. Free admission! A free-will offering will be taken for the ministry of KOTF. For more information, please call Dennis at (559) 643-0676.

JUNE

June 4: The Doobie Brothers, 6pm
Doors open at 6pm; showtime at 7:30pm at the Tachi Palace Bingo Hall. Tickets may be purchased at the Tachi Palace Gift Shop or online at tachipalace.com. Players club members receive a $5 discount. Tickets are $45, $65, $85.

June 8: TKRL Darrel Waterman Memorial 14th Annual Golf for Life Tournament, 10:30am
The 4-person shot-gun scramble represents a major fundraising event forTulare-Kings Right To Life. Entry fee is $150 per person, which entitles the participant to 18 holes of golf on one of Central California's finest courses, plus a light lunch and a catered dinner at the VCC clubhouse. Check-in begins at 10:30 a.m. with tee-off at 12:00noon. For information about Sponsor Packages and/or Registration Forms, contact April Kesterson at 732-5000, or visit www.tkrl.org.

June 13: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

June 13: Kings Lions Brewfest, 5-9pm
Beer tasting--and food!--at the Kings Lions complex (Hwy 198 &19th) 100% of the proceeds go to local/community charities. Tickets are $35 for the 21+ event. For more information call (559) 924-4417.

June 18: Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards Celebration, 6-9:30pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards celebration honoring Man, Woman and Businesses of the Year will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets are $70.00 each or a table of 8 for $520.00

June 19 to 28: Heritage of America
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a "Travel with the Chamber" trip, which includes airfare, 14 meals and a professional travel guide. Destinations include New York, Philadelphia, Amish Country, Gettysburg, Shenandoah Valley, Monticello, Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C. and the Smithsonian. For information, call 734-5876.

June 22 to 26: Yellowstone National Park Wildlife Safari
The Sequoia Natural History Association (SNHA) will hold an eco-tour of Yellowstone National Park. Reserve seats by calling 565-4222. For information, visit sequoiahistory.org.

June 27: Under the Streetlamp, 7:30pm
The Streetlamp will perform favorite Doo-Wop, Motown and old-time rock n' roll hits at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 300 Main St. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

June 29: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

JULY

July 11: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

July 12: Martina McBride: The Everlasting Tour, 7:30-9:30pm
Martina McBride returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre! A Rainmaker Productions event benefitting VRM. Tickets available vrmhope.org/events

See more events online ourvalleyvoice.com

Sports

For Tulare Western, Consistency Brings Excellence

Stefan Barros

Tulare Western High School's head Track and Field Coach, Tony Rodriguez, has built a program that could be considered a dynasty, seeing as how the Mustangs' success has been spread out during his 21 years at the helm. The boys' team has seen eight East Yosemite League Championships wins in a row and has won the title in 18 of his 21 years as coach. The girls' team has won 11 titles in a row and has won in 13 of his 21 years at the helm.

Rodriguez believes that consistency amongst the coaching staff is one of the biggest reasons for the prolonged success.

"We have had the same four coaches here for a while now. Mike Young has been here for 30 years. Traion Baker has been around for a lot of this success. Jordan Perry, who is our girls coach, was also an athlete here, and he's been coaching for our program for about nine or 10 years. Jess Washington is another one who is our jumps coach, and is one of the best in the state. He has been here for about nine or 10 years as well," he said.

So far as this season is concerned, Rodriguez still believes this team can continue its dominance in the EYL, even after his boys team lost its first dual match in eight years to Monache two weeks ago.

"We've been going back and forth with Monache for a couple of year now through this run, but we still have a talented group of boys and girls this year," he said. "We also have talented freshmen. I tell them that the run we've had shouldn't end this year. As long we have buy in from the players, we will be a strong team."

Rodriguez spoke further about the talented kids he has that come in every year and make an impact.

"Kids that come here are already fast," he said. "Our job is to not derail them or mess them up."

Even though Rodriguez has built a lot of depth with his teams over the years, and especially this year, he believes that it is important as well to have standouts.

"We care about our outstanding athletes," he said. "We also want to be able to develop athletes. I have had close meets where depth (or lack thereof) has made an impact. We've lost meets by one point and we've won meets one third of a point."

Rodriguez expounded on the point of how important it to have depth and to not rely on just one athlete.

"I tell the kids that sixth place is just as important as first place. We also have this umbrella idea that we use to help develop these kids that encompass everyone, not just one athlete." He said.

Rodriguez has 150 boys and girls on the team this year.

To have the success the Mustangs have had over the years, Rodriguez and his coaching staff may just have strengths that set them apart from other coaching staffs.

That is definitely the case with this staff, as Rodriguez explained, "The staff and I have developed a unique way of bringing out the best in these athletes. A lot of coaching is psychology, so it's a matter of, can we get them to do things that they thought they couldn't do. We have also tried to make sure the team is a family and create a good environment for success."

As years go by and styles change, one might think that a team would evolve, or maybe their strengths change as the years pass. That has not really been the case for the Mustangs, as they have been able to keep the same coaching staff intact for an extended period of time.

"The way I see it, teams take on the strength of the coach," Rodriguez said. "We have one of the best jump coaches in the state in Jess Washington, so we have a really good jump team. "

Rodriguez went on to elaborate on the topic of the program's strength and their extended dominance dating back twenty years.

"In 20 of my 22 years here we have had a kid in the statewide meet. Not many schools our size can say that," he said.

With all of Tulare Western's success, Rodriguez has tried to engrain one thing into the heads of athletes, so that they can be successful at all times.

"Can we be good when we're not good," he said. "The kids have really bought into what we're doing. The kids don't want this streak to end and they really understand what we want as coaches. With hard work comes success."

Victory Celebration, Ring Ceremony for WHCC Falcons Football to be Held May 12

Staff Reports

The 2014 Falcons. Photo courtesy WHCC.

The West Hills College Coalinga Falcons football team and staff will celebrate their historic 2014 season with a victory celebration and ring ceremony on May 12 in the WHCC gym. The event is free and open to the public.

The Falcons had a legendarily successful 2014 season, becoming Golden Coast Gold Conference Co-Champions and American Division Bowl Champions on top of achieving a school record.

"This celebrates the success of our entire program as it has achieved a lot this season," said Mark Gritton, WHCC Director of Athletics. "The champion ring ceremony in particular celebrates an historic achievement: the team being conference champions, post-season bowl champions and winning a school record 10 games."

The event will feature a presentation of championship rings to the 2014 team, a highlight video, and ice cream. Guest speakers will include former Fresno State Coach Pat Hill, WHCC and Fresno State alumni and former NFL player Dwayne Wright and Former Falcons coach Walt Johnson, coach of the 1964 team who became Community Junior College Association Champions.

Robert Tucker, the head coach of the team, said the team deserves the spotlight afforded by the celebration.

"I am so proud of this team because they understood early on that they would only be as good as they were close," he said. "They bonded together quickly and individual goals quickly became team goals. This ceremony is important because our student-athletes will be able to look down on their finger and be reminded that those values of blue-collar work ethic, toughness, trust, excellence, selflessness, integrity, passion, leadership, discipline, and commitment are truly rewarded on and off of the field."

To RSVP for the event, call Cam Olson at 934-2465.

West Hills College Coalinga Women's Softball Team Earns All-Conference Titles

While the season may be over for the West Hills College Coalinga Women's Softball team, the Falcons and their coach are continuing to earn recognition.

Three members of the team were named to Central Valley All-Conference teams while three were given honorable mentions. The team's head coach, Staci Mosher, was also named Coach of the Year for her work, earning the honor along with one other coach.

Kayla Day was named to the 1st Team All-Conference while Sydnee Cisneros and Valerie Romero were named to the 2nd team. Kelsea Brassart, Alyssa d'Artenay, and Ashley Brown earned honorable mentions.

"Kayla is a team leader both on and off the field," said Mosher. "Sydnee is one of the strongest pitchers in our conference and Valerie is a very solid defensive and offensive player for us. Kelsea is a very strong infielder and hitter while Alyssa has been a strong bat for us. Ashley has great range and a great arm up the middle."

Mosher herself said her Coach of the Year win was an honor. Mosher said the coach who nominated her, Vickie Dugan of Porterville College, said she picked Mosher because of her dedication to her team.

"She admired how I have been able to get my teams, who haven't traditionally been good to continue to compete hard from day one to the very last day, to adopt positive attitudes and work hard," Mosher said. "Having such small teams every year, we still fight until the end."

The team ended this season with a 15-21 win-loss record.

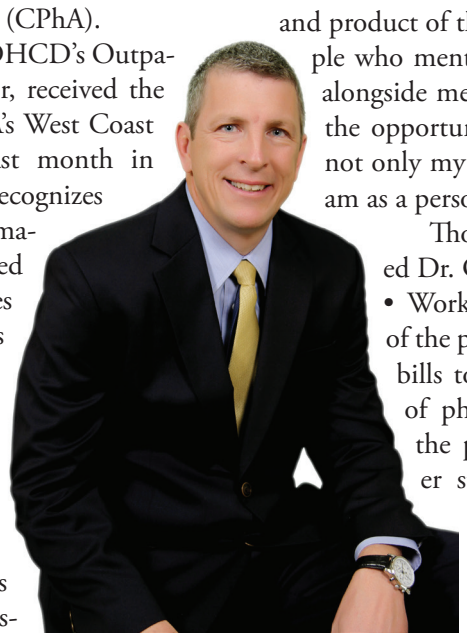
The 2014 Falcons Softball Team. Photo courtesy WHCC.

Health

Kaweah Delta Staff Member Named Pharmacist of the Year

Staff Reports

A Kaweah Delta Health Care District pharmacist has been named Pharmacist of the Year by the California Pharmacists Association (CPhA).



Dr. Ryan Gates, KDHCD's Outpatient Pharmacy manager, received the award during the CPhA's West Coast Pharmacy Exchange last month in Anaheim. The award recognizes a CPhA member pharmacist who has participated in outstanding activities in the profession and is well recognized by his colleagues for his/her professional advancements among other things.

"Dr. Gates is a great pharmacist who is dedicated to the profession. We are very excited to have him on board because of what he brings to the community," said Dr. James McNulty, pharmacy director of KDHCD.

Dr. Gates joined KDHCD Medical Center earlier this year. He is tasked with expanding outpatient pharmacy service and incorporating pharmacists in various health care settings to improve care for patients.

Dr. Gates says he would not have been recognized had it not been for those who helped him along the way.

"I see this award as a direct reflection and product of the incredible people who mentored me, worked alongside me and afforded me the opportunities that shaped not only my career, but who I am as a person," he said.

Those who nominated Dr. Gates cited his:

- Work to champion one of the profession's biggest bills to expand the role of pharmacy, SB 493, the pharmacy provider status bill. It was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown earlier this year.
- Efforts to help develop a diabetes clinic in Kern County primarily run by clinical pharmacists which gave diabetic patients access to much needed care.
- Growth and development as a premier clinician, teacher and his proficiency as an administrator, along with ability to advocate for patients and the profession of pharmacy.

Visalia EMS Provider Offers Free CPR Training May 20 in a Nationwide Effort to Save Lives

Staff Reports

If a person crumpled to the ground near you, would you know what to do? If that person was unconscious, what would you do next?

On Wednesday, May 20, in observation of National Emergency Medical Services Week, American Medical Response (AMR) operations across the country will train thousands of people to save lives through compression-only CPR. Compression-only CPR is easy to learn and has the ability to keep a cardiac arrest victim alive until paramedics arrive.

AMR is looking to partner with schools, local businesses and other interested groups to teach the compression-only CPR technique, which takes less than five minutes to learn.

"While our paramedics often get to an emergency quickly, during cardiac arrest immediate action can make the difference," said TJ Fischer, administrative supervisor.

"Compression-only CPR can help save lives and is easy to perform. We hope that schools, businesses and other groups will take this opportunity to get trained in compression-only CPR at no cost, making our community an even safer place to live," he said. Our primary goal is to save as many lives as possible, and we hope we can get more people excited about learning CPR by being part of a nationwide event."

Compression-only CPR allows bystanders to keep blood flowing through a victim's body just by pressing on the chest in a hard, fast rhythm. It has proven to be effective in saving lives.

To find out more about compression-only CPR and find out how your group can be part of this event, please visit www.amr.net/CPR or call Amercan Medical Response at 559-749-0911.

The event will be held Thursday, May 20, from 8am-5pm at Visalia Rawhide Ballpark, 300 N. Giddings St. at the Southwest entrance to the park.

American Medical Response, Inc., America's leading provider of medical transportation, provides services in 40 states and the District of Columbia. More than 18,000 AMR paramedics, EMTs, RNs and other professionals work together to transport more than 3 million patients nationwide each year in critical, emergency and non-emergency situations. AMR, a subsidiary of Envision Healthcare Corporation, is headquartered in Greenwood Village, Colo. For more information about AMR, visit www.amr.net and follow @AMR_Social on Twitter.

May is Mental Health Month

Tammie Weyker

The importance of addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying potential underlying diseases and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards recovery should be taken early. Bringing awareness to this process is the focus of Mental Health Month here in Tulare County.

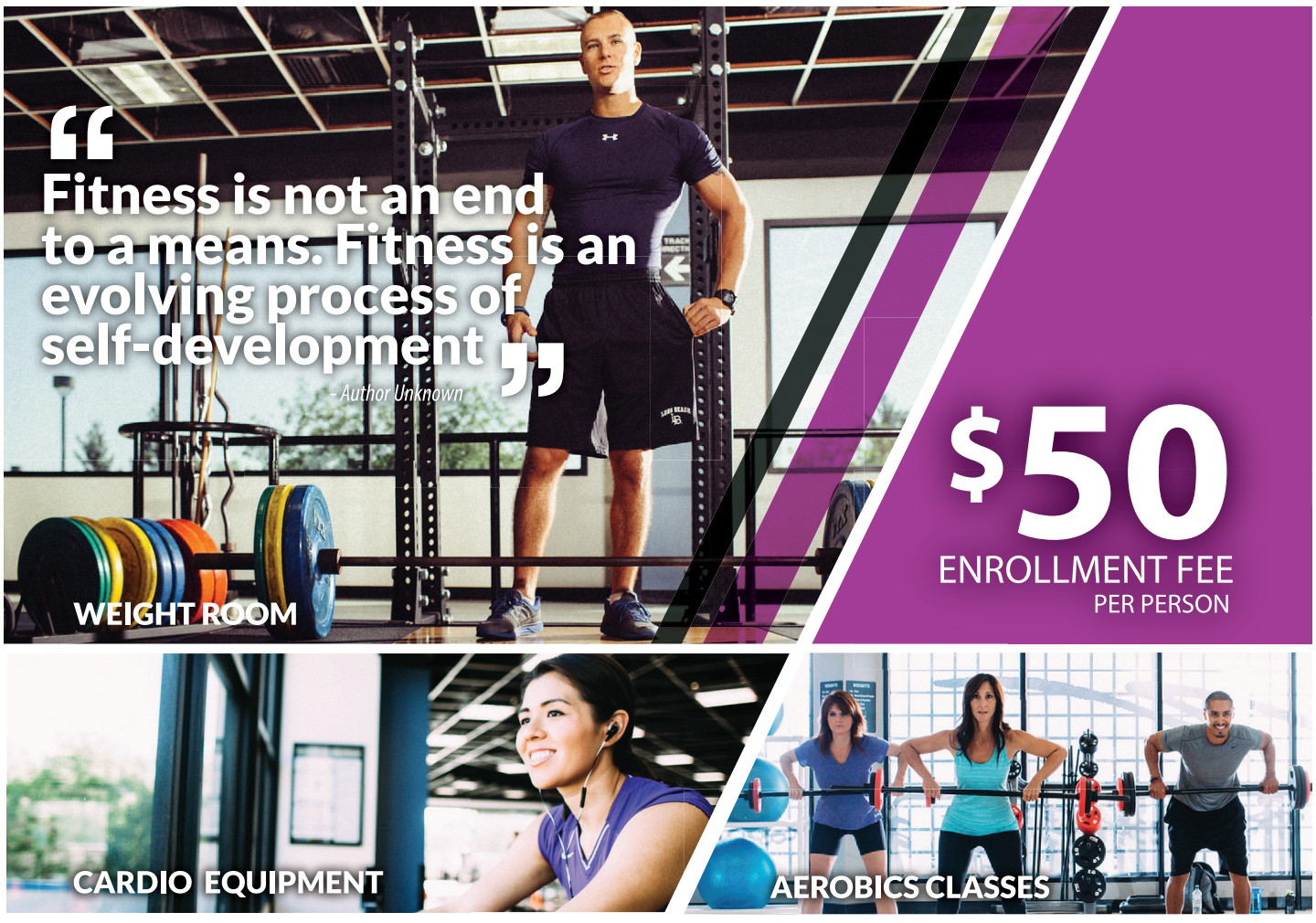
"When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait years to treat them; we take action at the earliest signs of disease," said Steve Worthley, chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

"During May, Mental Health Month, we are encouraging everyone to learn the signs, address symptoms early, ask for help, and plan an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health and recovery."

"Early symptoms might not ever become serious; however, sometimes they are a sign of something more severe and shouldn't be ignored," says Erin Brooks, chair of the Mental Health Board.

Maintaining mental health involves a balanced diet, regular exercise and sleep patterns, developing a sense of self-worth and coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends, and the community. For some residents, moving toward wellness also involves the assistance of medical staff and counselors.

"Prevention, early identification and intervention, and integrated services works. Taking a screening test is the first step to protecting your mental health and addressing mental illness," notes Dr. Timothy Durick, director of Mental Health for Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency.



The Lifestyle Center has educated, certified and experienced fitness professionals available to help you achieve your goals.

THE Lifestyle Center
A Division of Kaweah Delta Health Care District

Coming Soon!

Expanded Childcare & New Dynamic Strength and Functional Fitness Areas

For more information on The Lifestyle Center, or to schedule a private tour please call

(559) 624-3400

www.thelifestylecenter.org

Certain restrictions may apply. Offer not valid with any other offers or discounts. See a membership representative for details. Offer valid 4/1/2015 through 5/31/2015.

Rawhide Bats Spur Team to a Great Start of the Season

Nancy Vigran

The Visalia Rawhide are having tremendous success early this season with twice as many wins as losses-- far and away above the rest of the field in the California League thus far. There are many things contributing to this success, not the least of which are the Rawhide bats.

Scott Ijames

While no one player is paving the way, many batters are getting the job done said Jonathan Matthews, Rawhide hitting coach.

"We are off to a good start," Matthews said. "Everybody is contributing."

Batters are hitting for "team" at bats, versus "individual" at bats, he said.

"They are taking advantage of each other and those opportunities--which is a good thing," he added.

Despite an initial slump, Scott Ijames (OF, DH) is now leading the team with an average of .329. Kevin Cron (1B) leads the team in RBIs, while Domingo Leyba (SS) is not far behind.

Ijames said he initially started out trying too hard.

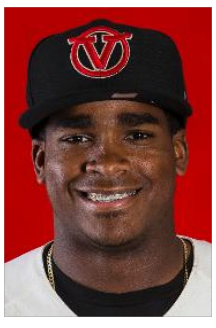
"I needed to slow down," he said. "Baseball is already fast, and if you try to start too fast, then you end up going backward."

Ijames said he made a few adjustments and while not necessarily trying to see more pitches, he is trying to see better pitches.

The 26-year-old Kentucky native was picked up by the Arizona Diamondback organization last year while he was playing independent ball. What has made this year particularly different was playing during spring training, he said. It helped, he said, although switching leagues and teams is not too difficult.

"People's faces change all the time in baseball, but the game is the same," he said.

Nineteen-year-old Leyba was traded to the Diamondback organization from the Tigers. He started this season in Visalia. Growing up in the Dominican Republic, he has always played baseball and enjoys the "competition and the desire to win."


Domingo Leyba

He is pleased with his start to the year, but feels things could be working better, he said, with the aid of his teammate and interpreter, Fidel Pena. Lebya would, however, like to see more base hits.

In order to become better at his craft, Leyba said he watches pitchers more closely and is spending more time in the batting cage.

His goal, like everyone in the game, is to move up in the team toward the Big Leagues.

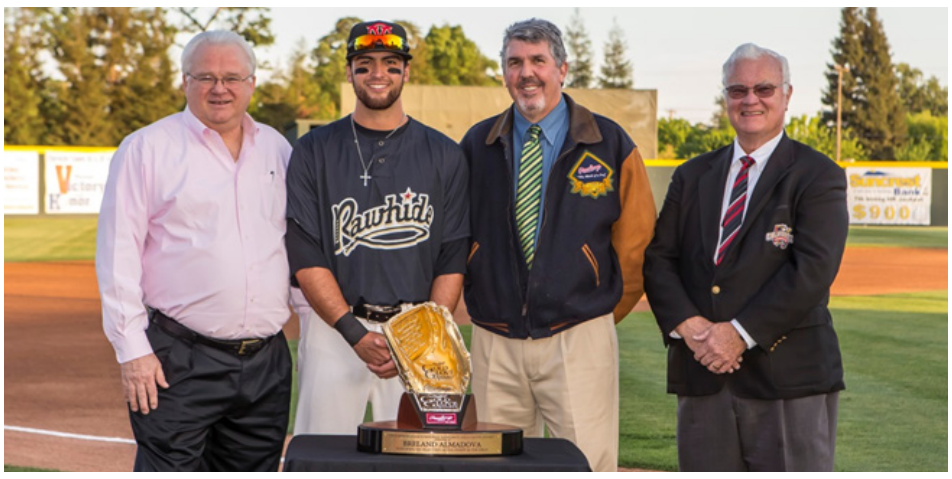
One of the Rawhides initially off to a great start and moving that way, is right-fielder Todd Glaesmann. A couple of weeks ago, he hit the cycle (hitting a single, double, triple and homerun all in one game).

"This is very unusual," Matthews said. "Todd has that special skillset of power and speed."

"And, he all most did it (hit for the cycle) two nights in a row," Matthews said.

Glaesmann advanced to AA ball following those two games and is now playing for the Mobile BayBears where his current average is .364.

Rawhide Outfielder Receives Gold Glove


Visalia Rawhide outfielder, Breland Almadova, receives his 2014 Rawlings Gold Glove award during a ceremony at a recent home game. Shown with Almadova from left to right is Minor League Baseball President Pat O'Connor, a Rawlings representative, and California League President Charlie Blaney. Photo by Ken Weisenberger

Youth Track & Field Tulare County Qualifier Meet on May 8

Porterville Parks & Leisure will host the Youth Track & Field Tulare County Qualifier Meet on Friday, May 8. All Tulare County youth athletes are invited to compete.

Age divisions for the meet include: Bantam- 9/10 year olds; Midget- 11/12 year olds; Youth- 13/14 year olds; Intermediate- 15, not in high school. Events include the 3000m, 1600 Relay, 80M Hurdles, 100M Hurdles, 400M Relay, 1500M, 100M, 800M, 400M, 200M, 3200 Relay, High Jump, Long Jump, Discus, Shot Put and Turbo Javelin.

The top three finishers in each event will qualify to compete at the Valley Track & Field Championship to be held at Buchanan High School in Clovis on Saturday, May 16. That event highlights the top athletes from Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Madera, and Kern counties.

The Qualifier Meet will take place at Granite Hills High School in Porterville, 1701 W. Putnam Avenue. Gates open at 3:45pm and events start at 4:30pm. There is a $2 admission fee for all participants and spectators.

For more information about the Qualifier Meet, check out the City of Porterville website, http://www.ci.porterville.ca.us/ or call (559) 782-7539.